"Angels in the Marble":

Voices of Immigrant Youth on Prince Edward Island

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University of Prince Edward Island

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"Angels in the Marble":

Voices of Immigrant Youth on Prince Edward Island

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We accept this thesis as confirming

to the required standard:

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Examiners' Names

Dr. Miles Turnbull

Dr. Ray Doiron

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my son, Sullivan (Sully) Birch, whose love, humor, and compassion motivated me to persevere to complete this study, which at times seemed like a daunting, impossible challenge while working full time, taking additional course work for my job, tutoring students, and being a single mom. Having been in the only English class in his grade level the last six years, and at times, having one-third of his class composed of EAL learners, Sully has told me one thing he really likes about my work is the fact I help his EAL classmates learn. His teachers have noticed him providing support to the EAL learners in his classroom with a smile, a kind gesture or a helpful explanation. In his own way, Sully exemplifies what is needed in more classrooms for all children to succeed: healthy human relationships which are at the heart of a great school experience. I hope Sully admires his mom for being both a teacher and a student during her own education as well as in the education of all her students over the last 20 years.

Abstract

This qualitative case study examined the lived experiences of 4 secondary English as Additional Language (EAL) students in Prince Edward Island schools and communities. More specifically, participants shared their perspectives on their unique and sometimes painful experiences in PEI secondary schools and communities. The following 2 research questions guided this research:

- What factors do EAL students say contribute to their successes in the PEI school system and community?
- What barriers do EAL students say inhibit their successes in the PEI school system and community?

Students participated in 2 in-depth research conversations of approximately 60 minutes each. Data were collected, analysed, compared and contrasted, using qualitative data collection and analysis techniques in order to respond to research questions which ultimately examined the contributing factors to the participants' successes as well as barriers to successes in the PEI school system and community. The second research conversation included the 4 participants' photographs they took and described as representations of their experiences in PEI secondary schools and communities. These representations were often symbolic objects (e.g., a letter, artwork, instrument, ethnic food) that had particular significance for each of the participants.

Similarities and differences among the responses were assessed and compared while taking account of students' English language levels, socio-economic status, educational and personal experiences, and length of time in Canada. Emerging themes, which examined the contributing factors to their successes and barriers, included: loneliness; isolation; English language level as a barrier; social networking; communication; engagement and disengagement;

motivation for moving; and, the loss of identity, culture and language. The data further revealed that 3 out of the 4 participants noted their biggest successes as making friends and doing well in school in at least one or more subjects. In contrast, all 4 participants noted their low or lower English language level was a significant barrier which ultimately affected their ability to communicate. As a result, they experienced loneliness and isolation and did not feel they made meaningful Canadian friendships. Marginalization and exclusion occurred in the 2 secondary schools the EAL participants attended. Moreover, participants cited their low English level as having a direct impact on their ability to participate in classes and comprehend the teacher and the material. They attributed lower grades, especially in English classes, as a result of their lower English language proficiency level.

Practical implications are discussed in relation to current research literature and previous studies. Specific recommendations to create more successes for secondary EAL students and to eliminate identified barriers to their successes are included.

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my former professor, thesis advisor, and friend, Dr. Miles Turnbull, for his continuous patience, guidance and most of all encouragement though the years. Thanks, Miles, for always reminding me that this is important work that needs to be shared. I truly appreciate you making time for updates and gentle nudges when needed. Thanks for not giving up on me when at times I came close to giving up on myself. I could not have completed this without your endless support. I hope I can continue this kind of encouragement and support to my own students when I return to the classroom one day.

I would also like to express my appreciation to my second reader, Dr. Ray Doiron, who encouraged me to pursue my idea of having my participants to use photography and their artwork to represent their experiences and to tell their stories about living and learning on PEI. Thanks, Ray, for taking the time to share your insights and suggestions.

Thank you to my internal examiner, Dr. Linyuan Guo, and my external examiner, Dr. Jan Stewart, for taking the time to read, examine, and provide feedback on my study.

This thesis would not have been possible without the participation of the four secondary EAL learners–*the Angels in the Marble*–who agreed to partake in this study by being interviewed and sharing their personal experiences through their responses, photography and artwork. I appreciate the time all of you took to meet with me and share your experiences, some of which were very painful at times. I hope your stories reach others in a way that they may be more empathic and take responsibility for making your school and communities experiences the most positive of ones.

To my mentor, friend and my supervisor, Janet Perry-Payne, for her knowledge, experience and endless support in my becoming a better educator and encouraging me to do my part in making the experiences of all EAL children and youth a better one in PEI schools. I am grateful, Janet, to be doing this work with you. Despite all the hurdles we have faced, we continue to refuse to be silenced on our plight to improve the educational experiences of the immigrant and refugee students on PEI. I am grateful to both the office staff: Paula Clark, Mike Leslie, Sarah Vos, Christina Johnson, Michelle Hilchey, and our entire EAL/FAL team for being part of you all.

I am appreciative to my mother, Anne Storey, for always sharing her stories and modeling a love of literature and writing growing up. It was rare Mom did not have a pen or a book in her hand. Thanks, Mom, for helping me find my voice in writing and in life. I also appreciate the endless conversations with my father, Gordie Whitlock and my step-mother Wanda Whitlock, on the PEI public education system from our own combined experiences as teachers, specialists, administrators and directors. Thanks, Dad and Wanda, for passing on your love of teaching to me. I apologize to my siblings, Julie, Jamie, Audra and Jonathan for the endless dinner table chatter on teaching! I forgive you for responding, "Oh well you have the summers off!" To all my family, thank you for your encouragement and support.

"Angels in the Marble": Voices of Immigrant Youth on Prince Edward Island

I saw the angel in the marble and carved until I set him free. Every block of stone has a statue inside it and it is the task of the sculptor to discover it.

~Michelangelo

As the sculptor's task is to chip away at the marble to make a discovery, similarly it is the task of the researcher to discover and understand by digging through data. As the novice researcher in this study, I was chipping away at a large block of stone, consisting of a language barrier and a risk, to discover and understand the personal stories of my participants. Sharing one's personal story can be very risky, especially when one is a teenager from a visible minority without all the words. This study is a journey of discovering four immigrant students'—*the Angels in the Marble*—stories on Prince Edward Island. The stories start in this first chapter, with Majid (pseudonym) whose self-discovery as a statue, was for him, very negative and sad.

Sometimes in groups they [students] don't talk to you and look at you. They don't even mention you or something. I will just be sitting there like a statue. Just being in a group. But not being alone. Like I am being ignored. Like I am in a group but I am still lonely.

~Majid

During both his research conversations[1], I realized this young man had much to say. As he talked about his experiences in high school and his community, I felt like the sculptor, trying to discover and understand what was inside of him, who he was, and what made life for him here

[1] The term "research conversations" was used instead of "interview" since a conversation connotes an informal, casual dialogue more conducive to making the participants feel at ease while sharing their stories. This design strategy accurately described the data collection, which is discussed further in Chapter 3-Methodology and Methods.

on PEI challenging, and hopefully, rewarding. This is, essentially, the overall purpose for this study. I begin and end this thesis with Majid. In the last chapter we return to how he really feels about learning and living on Prince Edward Island and the Beirut that he has left behind.

The Genesis of My Study

There are three sources of inspiration for this study. First, having taught several English as an additional language (EAL)[2] youth, and thinking of my former EAL students' feelings of isolation and loneliness, I often wondered what more I could have done, as their teacher and an Islander, to make their lives on Prince Edward Island more enriching. I often thought of my students' perspectives and how I could learn more personally and professionally to contribute to making their experiences in PEI schools and communities more significant and memorable. Second, the changing demographic landscape in PEI and across Canada requires further research to understand the experiences of immigrants to Canada. Specifically, this study examines immigrant youth experiences in PEI schools and communities. Third, my study addresses a gap in the research literature. There is a paucity of research on immigrant experiences in Canada. Moreover, a few small studies have been conducted on PEI, and all call for additional research to ensure a much richer understanding of barriers and enablers as PEI, like many other jurisdictions, strive to recruit and retain these new immigrants. The following sections provide an overview of these three sources of inspiration for this study, the specific research questions addressed, and an overview of this thesis.

[2] Although many terms have been used to describe language learners: ESL (English as a second language); ELL (English language learners); LEP (limited English proficiency), for the purpose of this study, language learners are referred to as EAL (English as additional language) students. The term "EAL" is used as it accurately describes those who already have a first language and often a second language. So, for those learning English, it is their additional language; it exists as an additional language regardless of whether or not it is a second, third, etc.

Personal significance of the study. Teaching English as an Additional Language (EAL) to 19 high school students from various countries and cultures with 13 different languages taught me that I did not have enough knowledge on what immigrant and refugee students were experiencing in PEI schools and communities. Teaching young African males how to speak English well, who had never been to school before, was irrelevant when their safety concerns regarding them drinking the water took precedence over learning English. These young men from the Congo left PEI shortly after high school to move to Toronto. When they, like many other refugee students, left high school there were few educational or professional opportunities for them. Many former EAL students often shared their experiences with me as their teacher. One of my former students from India told me something that would have a lasting and profound effect on how I began to reflect on my students' experiences. She told me that the kids at school were friendly to her, but that nobody wanted to be her friend. Students would say hello to her and smile, but she didn't get asked to go to anyone's home, have dinner, or socialize outside of school. Her only friends were other international students in her EAL classroom, and this was not unlike many of the EAL youth I had met over the last ten years.

The ideas for this thesis topic also emanated from my own personal experiences living in the French culture of Quebec City as well as the Middle Eastern culture of the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Teaching English to young adult females from Somalia, Sudan, Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, Bahrain, Oman and the UAE, in the first year of their nursing diploma program, gave me great insight into their worlds. My Somali and Sudanese students didn't talk of their fathers since they hadn't seen them since they left Africa. They didn't know if they had been killed or captured during civil unrest. I realized I had much to learn. Being the only Western woman at the Al Ain, Abu Dhabi Institute of Nursing was lonely, isolating, and humbling. I will never

forget the vulnerability I felt as well as the susceptibility in the story-telling eyes of my students—the only parts of their faces I could see. Although I was very much their "teacher" in all respects, my connections with many of my students and their own families were unlike any other previous teaching experiences. On my last day of work in the UAE, my students presented me with a scrapbook of letters, photos and pictures of their experiences with me. The letters expressed how they valued me as their teacher, citing things I had taught them. Some of the pictures were self-portraits of them crying, saying how much they would miss me and that they would never forget me. I look at this scrapbook from time to time, as I remember their stories and what they had taught me. Not only did they teach me to examine my own biases and beliefs to become a better teacher, but they also taught me to become a better student. To be allowed to attend nursing school to become educated was a huge privilege for these ladies, as many were under familial pressure to get married and stay home to raise their children. They taught me about fasting during Ramadan and how to write Miss Vicki in Arabic, while I taught them about the PEI potato and how to appreciate a great PEI 'fiddle-jig'. We laughed together at our cross-cultural nuances, and we cried together when one of their "sisters" was forced to drop out of school to get married to a stranger at the age of 19. Upon reflection, that teaching experience, especially the amazing scrapbook my former students gave me, became the impetus for the idea to ask the students I would interview to share their experiences with me in the form of a visual representation, through either the lens of a camera or the lead of their pencils.

In addition to that overseas experience, my recent role as the English as an Additional Language (EAL) Curriculum Specialist, as well as my current role as EAL Teacher Support Specialist with the English Language School Board contributed to my own professional learning and became further catalysts for my research**.**

In my role as EAL Teacher Support Specialist, I had the opportunity to travel to Beijing and Shanghai in October of 2010 as part of a delegation –The Education Officials Visit to China– where I was invited to learn more about International Education and the partnerships between Canada and China. On this visit to China, I had the opportunity to visit a few schools and chat with students from ages 6 to 16. These students seemed extremely engaged. They were smiling, laughing, asking questions, giving responses, and interacting with their peers in poetry, physical education, music, and science classes. I thought about some of my former Chinese students on PEI who seemed far less engaged and invested than those I observed in China. Some of my former students told me often they did not find school here as challenging or stressful. Yet, the common thread for most was their lack of "Canadian" friends. I had learned that Chinese students coming to PEI experience vast differences between countries, cultures, customs and languages, and their educational experiences from China to Canada vary greatly. Travelling to China, visiting these schools and meeting these children and youth, gave me a better appreciation and understanding for the cultural and educational challenges these students face. I aimed to know the experiential reality of their worlds, so I could better understand, from their perspectives, what their daily lives at school and the community have meant to them. This deeper understanding will hopefully translate into my teaching practice when I return to the classroom, and more immediately, how I currently support teachers who teach EAL students.

Although my thesis explores a much bigger picture than only culture shock, adjustment and acculturation, I hope that through giving these four participants a chance to deeply share their stories through our conversations and their photography, that I might come to understand their realities so that I can do my part to disseminate useful information and knowledge to other educators and any stakeholders. Perhaps then, this newfound knowledge may contribute to

making these students' experiences in PEI schools and communities welcoming, inclusionary, and ones in which they are encouraged to stay and be a bigger part of Prince Edward Island society and economy.

As a lower language proficiency level can be a barrier for orally explaining one's experiences, I also gave these EAL students opportunities to create visual representations (e.g., taking photos, drawing a picture, making a collage or writing a poem) of their experiences on PEI. For these students, words might not have captured what photographs could. In a photographic representation, the camera lens was an extension of the student's eye. The participants were encouraged to snap a photo of objects that represented their experiences, or stories, in addition to telling them.

The Changing Demographic: Immigration in Canada and on PEI

> The people who have come to Canada have, by their efforts and talents, fashioned this country's institutions, political and economic character, and cultural diversity. In short, they have made Canada what it is today (Knowles, 2007, p. 9).

Canada attracts immigrants to many of its various provinces for particular reasons, some of which include lifestyle, peacefulness, freedom and economical and educational opportunities. Bigger cites like Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal, often attract immigrants with perceptions of more economic opportunities and bigger education institutions. However, bigger does not always translate to better. While there may be more jobs, the types of jobs may be menial and outside of one's own training and experience gained from his/her home country. Demographically larger and densely populated cities may also have a broader sense of community for many immigrants where they have relatives, friends, acquaintances or ghettos of

residents from their own cultures. Moreover, the designation of immigrants to a particular province in Canada is often pre-determined prior to arrival.

Sometimes a smaller city like one in Atlantic Canada may be more isolating due to its lack of immigrants from the same cultural background. Yet, Atlantic Canada still attracts immigrants at a significant rate. Atlantic Canada looks to immigrants to provide labor market growth and talent. In population projections, immigrants will account for 30% of Canada's population by 2031 as 240,000 newcomers settle in Canada every year (Statistics Canada, 2012). Immigration is an important aspect of population growth in Canada

Over the same period, Statistics Canada (2012) projections of immigrants to Atlantic Canada show an increase from 4% to 6%. Therefore, in Atlantic Canada immigrants represent a smaller but growing share of the population. However, while there is little data regarding immigrant retention rates, enrolment statistics reveal that students (who usually are attached to families) are leaving PEI as there are not as many EAL students enrolled this year as in previous years (see Appendix J). Attracting immigrants to Atlantic Canada does not seem to be the problem- keeping them here long-term does. Yet, many stakeholders do not seem to be investing themselves and their positions into strategic plans to entice people to stay to enhance the Island's economy in a way it can sustain itself with a decreasing population. Listening to immigrant students' stories on their academic and community experiences here on PEI is one small, but important, piece to the overall puzzle and will be necessary to create strategic retention plans.

Immigration on PEI. Canada's smallest province and the birthplace of Canada, Prince Edward Island, has had an increasing number of immigrants to its province, mainly due to the PEI Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) in 2001- a 5-year federal-provincial pilot program between the Province of PEI and the Federal Government of Canada represented by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). Preliminary tables of permanent and temporary residents from 2007-2011 show a steady incline from 2007-2010 (992, 1,443, 1,723, 2,581) but then shows a decline in 2011 (1,731) (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2011).

The increasing immigrant population on PEI over the last five years has risen to a level that has had a significant effect on the Island's social, health, economic and educational systems. Families with school-age children are enrolling their offspring into Prince Edward Island schools with high hopes and standards for success. These students, English as Additional Language (EAL) learners, have similar aspirations for themselves as do their parents.

EAL on PEI: a Historical Perspective

EAL learners bring their cultural and linguistic resources with them to the classroom, hoping to attain academic success in their new Canadian educational setting. These resources they bring can create a more global classroom in which ideas, cultures, and languages are shared and welcomed. True integration and inclusion actually occur and not just because students sit beside one another in the same traditional classroom. In addition, the learner's culture and language reflect his/her identity. The degree to which the new diversities are accepted and welcomed in the school system and PEI community will have a significant effect on the learner's self efficacy, identity, sense of belonging and immigrant retention.

The genesis of this thesis project also emerged from my quest for greater understanding of the experience of the large numbers of EAL students (over 1000 in 2012) who have recently arrived in PEI schools from 57 different countries with ancestral roots in Asia, Africa, Europe and South America (EAL Reception Centre Database, 2009-2012). Cultural and linguistic diversities are becoming the norm in schools like an urban high school with an immigrant population of close to 20% of the total population. With such cultural and linguistic diversities permeating the schools, there are many opportunities to enrich the education of PEI youth, but there are also many additional pedagogical challenges facing teachers, administrators, students and their parents. Research is clearly needed to take advantage of these opportunities and address these challenges.

Previous Research

The following section includes previous research on immigrant and refugee[3] youths' experiences in Canadian and Prince Edward Island schools and communities. While there is a plethora of Canadian research in the area of immigration, the most pertinent Canadian studies (Chuang, 2010; Stewart, 2007) with regard to this thesis, focus on the experiences of immigrant and refugee youth as told from their perspectives through focus groups and interviews. Moreover, this initial section includes the valuable document, *Resources for Working with Newcomer Youth, Guide on Programming for Newcomer and Refugee Youth* (2011), published by the Ontario Community Integration Network, which is a collection of some of the best ideas

[3] While anyone immigrating to new country to take up permanent residency is considered to be an "immigrant," according to the 1951 United Nations Convention (UNCHR, 2010), a refugee is "Any person who: owing to a well-rounded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside his/her country of nationality, and is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country (p.14).

on the World Wide Web. Also included is a recent report out of British Columbia (Fresh Voices Youth Advisory Team [YAT], 2013) that consulted immigrant and refugee youth on their experiences which further provide fodder for the recommendations discussed in the last chapter of this thesis. Finally, the most relevant studies on immigrant and refugee youth on Prince Edward Island (Arsenault, 2008; Baldacchino, 2006; MacNevin, 2011) conclude this section. Each of these studies calls for more research in PEI to more adequately understand the immigrant experience in PEI schools and communities, hence the third reason for conducting this thesis study.

Research across Canada. Chuang's (2010) study examined 125 newcomer youths' pathways as newcomer youth from five provinces (Alberta, British Columbia, Nova Scotia, Ontario, and Quebec). Youth were asked about their personal adjustment and settlement experiences in Canada. There were also asked from their perspective, the settlement challenges that their families experienced.

A total of 125 newcomer youth (60 girls, 65 boys) from five provinces of Canada participated. For youth to participate, they had to "be in Canada 5 years or less, have permanent immigrant status (e.g., refugee and immigrants, legally residing in Canada) and be between the ages of 11-20" (Chuang, 2010, p. 2). The project consisted of two parts: a background questionnaire with a written component of listing one's top three settlement challenges and a focus group. Youth's written responses about their personal challenges formed the discussion for the focus groups. Chuang (2010) identified the top six challenges the youth faced:

1. language barriers and acquisition (making friends, academic success, reading, writing and speaking especially with limited vocabulary and grammar)

2. negative behaviors (anti-social/deviancy, racism and discrimination)
3. peer relations (language barrier in creating relationships and building relationships)
4. school challenges (grading, school system, academic performance, peer exclusion, cultural practices and norms)
5. Canadian environment (weather and physical environment)
6. Canadian culture (customs, norms and beliefs) (pp. 9-21).

In addition to Chuang's (2010) study, Stewart's (2007) qualitative research study explored the experiences of high school refugee students in Manitoba who emigrated from countries affected by armed conflict. Data were gathered using semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and focus group interviews. Findings included that the *pre-migration* and *trans-migration* experiences were unique, diverse, and not always completely understood by others. The post-migration stage consisted of four dominant kinds of challenges: 1) *educational* 2) *economic* 3) *environmental* 4) *psychosocial*. Stewart's (2007) study showed the major role education played in the students' lives, "The desire to get an education outweighed their other needs, including basic necessities and the reunification of their families" (Stewart, 2011, p. 39). Even though education was a way out of poverty and an opportunity to become educated, many faced adjustments and barriers that affected their achievement. Stewart (2007) found that "racism, discrimination and ethnically-based conflict were themes that fed into students' expressed sense of mistrust and insecurity" (p. ii). She also noted the psychosocial needs of war-affected children are challenging to identify, understand and address. Stewart's (2007) key finding was the existence of a nanosystem—a smaller, more intimate network from the student's microsystem. The nanosystem was the link to various ecological systems and assisted with adjustment. Stewart (2007) concluded her dissertation by suggesting, "Purposeful steps should

be taken by school leaders to facilitate pedagogical practices that make school more equitable and just" (p. ii).

Other pertinent research studies (Armstrong, Beiser, Oxmen-Martinez, & Rummens, 2005; Kilbride & Ainsef, 2001; Kilbride, Ainsef, Baichman-Anisef, & Katter, 2000; Ngo & Schleifer, 2005; Taylor, 2005 as cited in Chuang, 2010) provided the basis for understanding the needs of newcomer youth and the principles behind successful programming; one main goal of the document is to identify best or promising practices for meeting immigrant students' needs. The researchers agreed on characteristics of successful programming such as: engaging youth, building relationships, empowering youth, and providing flexible programming options which are discussed more in Chapter 5.

Similarly, in 2011, the Vancouver Foundation and British Columbia's Representative of Children and Youth launched *Fresh Voices from Long Journeys*, an initiative to engage immigrant youth and refugee youth from across the province in dialogue and action. The ultimate goal was to improve the policies and practices that affect immigrant and refugee youths' sense of belonging in British Columbia and Canada. To achieve this, the Vancouver Foundation engaged an advisory group of 18 immigrant and refugee youth and youth workers called the Fresh Voices Youth Advisory Team [YAT] (2013). As a result, key themes and recommendations that emerged and reflections on the process were outlined in the Fresh Voices YAT (2013).

"Immigration" was the first theme identified in the Fresh Voices YAT (2013). Moving to Canada in and of itself is often a very difficult transition for many newcomers. This transition can be greatly affected by the pathway they take to enter the country. For example each entry

experience can vary significantly. Newcomers can arrive as permanent residents, family sponsorships, students, government assisted refugees, and refugee claimants. Changes to Canada's refugee determination system through Bill C-31 caused much anxiety for youth who feared faster determinations and designated *safe* countries of origin could deny fair hearings for refugee claimants. The amount of paperwork was also a concern for many youth, but especially for refugees who were barely surviving in refugee camps, sometimes over ten years for the claims to be processed. Moreover, once they arrived refugee claimants stated that the immigration system was hard to navigate due to language barriers. Some of youth equated not being born in Canada to being considered second class citizens.

"School and English Language Learning" was the second theme identified. For newcomers, children, youth, and families, the public education system plays a critical role in their ability to settle, adapt, and build skills, networks and support. Experiences in school related in English language learning (ELL) were a major focus within all community dialogues. Although many immigrant and refugees were appreciative of many teachers, youth workers and support staff, several criticisms of ELL were also revealed (Fresh Voices YAT, 2013). Immigrant and refugee youth also noted that the school system was not inclusive of other languages as there was an underlying message that they need to speak English as it is the only valued language in Canada. Several youth stated concerns on how some supports can heighten segregation and loneliness and increase segregation at school which consequently creates loneliness. Students mentioned that their extra-curricular activities helped them build relationships, friendships and a sense of belonging.

"Family" was the third theme revealed. Participants acknowledged "the importance of family connections and feelings of belonging as essential to their wellbeing" (Fresh Voices YAT,

2013, p.8). Some students had experienced separation from their families. Those with family already here noted this was helpful in their transition. Under the theme of "Family" (Fresh Voices YAT, 2013), some youth were challenged by changes in family dynamics and roles that occurred after coming to Canada. The power structure in the home often shifted as youth found it easier to learn the new language. Poverty was also cited by many of the refugee students as a barrier for them and their families. Since settlement support was very modest and didn't really meet basic necessities, parents were often working two or more jobs to make ends meet. Families were living in small apartments in low rental areas that they described as "rough." In addition, government assisted refugees had to pay back medical and transportation costs.

"Building Bridges and Working in Solidarity" was the last theme (Fresh Voices YAT, 2013). Many cited feeling, "alone, isolated, strange, alienated, and unwelcome" (Fresh Voices YAT, 2013, p.11). The culture shock that some of the students described was overwhelming. They noted that Canadian culture was more individualistic than their home cultures. Feelings of inadequacy and alienation resulted from them describing being stereotyped by others.

There are many parallels between the themes identified in the Fresh Voices YAT (2013) report and those discussed in Chapter 4. Similarly, in Chapters 4 and 5, I discuss the findings from my study in relation to those from across Canada and PEI.

Research on PEI. There is a paucity of local research that has examined immigrant experiences in schools and communities in PEI, primarily from students' perspectives. However, there are three relevant studies (Arsenault, 2008; Baldacchino, 2006; MacNevin, 2011) that do include an examination of immigrant or refugee experiences. These studies served as the

impetus for my study and as a point of comparison in the discussion of the findings in chapters four and five.

Most recently, MacNevin's (2011) Master of Education thesis examined teaching and learning for youth from refugee backgrounds in PEI schools. MacNevin (2011) looked at what was being done in other Canadian provinces to engage learners from refugee backgrounds. She also explored the teaching practices, challenges and opportunities as experienced by students from refugee backgrounds. MacNevin (2011) considered the programs, supports, and pedagogical strategies that could be integrated into Prince Edward Island's educational contexts in order to enhance educational experiences for students from refugee backgrounds.

MacNevin (2011) analysed eight policy guideline documents pertaining to both immigrant and refugee youth to determine what teaching and practices and policies exist across Canada. She also interviewed seven PEI teachers who taught refugee youth. MacNevin (2011) also conducted observations for six hours in two grade nine classes in order to explore teaching strategies for students from refugee backgrounds. Her study included student journals by seven youth from refugee backgrounds who were attending intermediate and secondary schools in PEI.

MacNevin's (2011) data revealed that the main challenge for refugee youth was language proficiency. The findings also confirmed that the challenges go beyond language acquisition and that students from refugee backgrounds may have experienced trauma and interruptions in their education. Although MacNevin (2011) does indicate some services are offered for refugee youth, she does suggest that there needs to be improvements in services available to refugee youth such as counseling, one-on-one support, teacher training and school inclusion practices.

She also calls for much more research relating to immigrant and refugee experiences in a variety of school and community contexts in PEI.

Another study, a small action research project (Arsenault, 2008) revealed some very telling themes regarding secondary EAL students 'experiences. Arsenault (2008) looked at the educational and social experiences of five EAL high school students (from Mongolia, Nigeria, Serbia, China and Korea) who were in the researcher's grade 11 academic law class.

Arsenault (2008) collected data using a survey, oral interviews and observations. 4 students out of 5 had exposure to English prior to coming to PEI, whether from a tutor, class, or private lesson. Most spoke their first language at home and with friends from a similar culture. All of the participants only spoke English at school. All were happy to make friends, but most found it difficult to make friends outside of their "race" as Arsenault's (2008) results revealed his participants found it easier to make new friends through athletic activities. Moreover, when participants were asked what they found the most challenging on Prince Edward Island, all five participants cited language and English (i.e., accents, speak too fast) as a challenge. Two of them actually described it as "hitting a wall with Canadian friends" (Arsenault, 2008, p.5). Arsenault also calls for additional research with a larger sample and scope.

Baldacchino's (2006) qualitative, person-centered study of approximately 4.500 adult immigrants to PEI between 1998 and 2003, 320 (slightly over 7.1%) completed a 25-question survey questionnaire. Baldacchino's (2006) research objectives of his study were mainly six:

> (a) To identify why people have recently 1998-2003) come to settle and decided to stay on PEI; (b) to flesh out the concept of 'well being' and quality of life' in relation to PEI; (c) to serve as a follow-up to the 1999 Provincial Population Strategy; (d) to provide a

> more informed understanding of why people come and stay, thus conforming widely held beliefs as to why people 'from away' come to 'the Island', while providing knowledge with which to devise suitable schemes and strategies for immigrant attraction and retention; (e) to suggest insights as to why many newcomers to PEI don't settle here and move elsewhere; and (f) to serve as a prototype to similar studies (p.1).

Results of this survey revealed that respondents appreciated best the attractive quality of living on PEI, which was provided as the main reason for moving to the Island. Being close to family, or to one's roots, was another key consideration. Other factors pulling people to PEI included: availability; promise or prospects for employment or business; affordable housing or farm land; sedate temperament; rural-urban balance; lure of ocean and beaches, and relatively mild winters. Only five of the respondents were classified as primarily negative (Baldacchino, 2006). Also, in sharing their stories, respondents cited hassle-free security, lower crime, slower tempo, shorter distance and commuting times, small town atmosphere, lovely summers and affordable housing as the main pull factors that enticed people to move to PEI (Baldacchino, 2006). In terms of those respondents (mainly non-Canadians) who had actively planned to leave the Island, the alleged closed-mindedness of Islanders and their guarded attitude towards "Come From Aways" (CFAs) were the main reasons cited by those planning to leave. Low wages, high taxes, bridge tolls, job seasonality and inability to specialize at work were other factors cited as reasons to leave PEI. Those keenest to stay on PEI were returned Islanders (Baldacchino, 2006).

Other important findings from Baldacchino's (2006) study included the fact that respondents' opinions about staying on PEI were more positive than opinions about coming to PEI. When sharing their stories about PEI, respondents cited the quality of the natural environment and the importance of getting involved in local activities (i.e., work, church,

culture, business). However, they cited the challenge of fitting in yet also the relative ease of making friends with other immigrants rather than Islanders. The solid homogeneity and non-multiculturalism, informal communication channels and robust kin and friendship network provide a strong sense of identity and resilience to the Island society, which was very welcoming to visitors and tourists. At the same time, this particular society was very difficult to penetrate by those who 'come from away' and stay longer than the visitors and tourists do.

Filling in the Gap

Previous local research studies of immigrant and refugees stories of moving, living, and leaving PEI (Arsenault, 2008; Baldacchino, 2006; MacNevin, 2011), highlight the challenges and successes of learning and living on PEI. Although MacNevin (2011) and Arsenault (2008) focus on immigrant and refugee youth and Baldacchino (2006) focuses on adults, many of the same themes, including loneliness, isolation, English language as a barrier, breaking into PEI society, are revealed.

More local research of immigrant and refugee youth is needed to further understand what they are experiencing while learning and living on PEI. More specifically, asking these newcomers directly what their successes and challenges in their schools and communities is essential. Although former surveys in previous local research included oral interviews (Arsenault, 2008) and journal entries (MacNevin, 2011), no other local study has explored immigrant youths' experiences through both research conversations and photography.

Specific Research Questions

My thesis study contributes to filling in a gap in this most important area of research that explores immigrant youths' voices on their successes and challenges in PEI schools and communities. More specifically, the following two research questions guided this thesis:

1. What factors do EAL students attribute to their successes in the PEI school system and community?
2. What barriers do EAL students say inhibit their successes in the PEI school system and community?

Significance of the study. The overall aim of this research was to give immigrant students a voice in the PEI education system and community. The results of this study will contribute towards an increase in our knowledge and understanding four EAL secondary students' lived experiences in PEI schools and communities. Interviewing EAL students and giving them time to reflect upon and share their experiences will also hopefully lead the participants to feel welcomed, accepted and included. It is hoped that even a small number of students may realize that they do very much matter as newcomers to Canada. Noting immigrants' stories and hearing their voices is a useful addition to the immigrant population statistics which are already relatively available (Baldacchino, 2006).

When we can identify with someone being excluded, ignored, rejected and even discriminated against, we may want to learn more in order to take responsibility for making the change that we want to see, whether in the classroom or community. Therefore, the ultimate goal of this study is to share stories with the intention of doing more of what creates success and doing less of what creates challenges for EAL youth in their schools and neighborhoods.

The outcomes of this study will help educators, stakeholders, and policy makers better understand what secondary EAL students need to achieve their goals at school and in the community. As a result, this new knowledge can be integrated into current and future educational initiatives aimed at ultimately retaining these new immigrants on PEI for the long term. The information and recommendations for successful support for immigrants and their children in our PEI schools and communities could serve as a model to improve immigrant retention for other small communities in Canada where immigration is also on the rise and where little research has been done.

Overview of the Thesis

This thesis is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 has provided an introduction to the topic, the genesis, and a rationale for the study and the specific research questions addressed. Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature pertaining to language acquisition, namely the relationship between the environment, identity and investment in language learning. Also included is the study's conceptual foundation, which is informed by Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986) and also by Bandura's (1995) notion of self efficacy and sense of belonging in his Social Learning Theory. Moreover, I draw on language learning research from Bonnie Norton's (2000) theory of investment in language learning, and Jim Cummins' et al., (2005, 2007) perspectives on negotiating and affirming identity in the classroom and community.

Discussed in Chapter 3 are the methodology and specific data collection methods used to collect, code, synthesize and analyse the data. Chapter 4 reveals the participants; portraits and the common themes, resulting from the data collection and analysis are introduced and discussed in Chapter 4. In Chapter 5, the data presented in the previous chapters are reviewed and the

findings are compared and contrasted as they relate to the research literature. As well in this last chapter, the limitations of the study and recommendations based on the findings are discussed.

Chapter 2-Literature Review

This chapter provides a review of the literature that informed the study design and data analysis. More specifically, I will present a summary of relevant literature pertaining to additional language learning and the factors that contribute to making a learner successful in the acquisition of an additional language-in this study's case the additional language being English. As one of the key factors in learning a language is motivation, relevant literature, including traditional theories of this construct, as well as the more recent and progressive concept of investment are presented. Power relations within the target language community are also discussed before reviewing the literature regarding *Social Cognitive Theory* (SCT) and the learner's environment and socialization within his/her environment. Within SCT, the literature on the learner's identity, self efficacy, and a sense of belonging are examined. Finally, the relationships between these factors- motivation and investment, power relations, environment, identity, self efficacy, and sense of belonging—in language learning are closely reviewed.

English as an Additional Language (EAL) Acquisition Factors

There are several misconceptions about learning English as an additional language, starting with the idea of only speaking English at school and home, negating the first language. Also, some educators believe that students should learn the target language prior to taking any core courses (math, science, social studies) in English, the language of instruction. In turn, other educators may think taking shorter, intense "fix-it" type courses or a few hours of tutoring will accelerate English language learning. Finally, a good command of spoken, social language means that a student understands and can demonstrate a higher level of academic concepts in English. The reality is, however, that learning another language, English or otherwise, takes

time, and that amount of time varies, just as the level of challenge varies among learners. Language theorists like Jim Cummins (1979) identified that language learning is both social and academic- learning *Basic Communication Skills Language* (*BICS)* takes at least two years, while learning *Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency* (*CALP*) can take 5-7 years barring any learning or literacy challenges in one's prior educational experiences.

Many EAL acquisition theorists (Coehlo, 2004; Cummins, 1979; Freeman & Freeman, 2009; Gunderson, 2011; Krashen, 1981; Pierce, 1993) have examined which factors make a language learner successful in learning the target language. All agreed there are several contributing factors and processes-motivation, investment, identity, power relations and environment- that affect language learning. While many discussions regarding additional language acquisition revolve around teaching and learning methodologies, less attention has typically been based on contextual factors-individual, social, and societal-that affect students' learning" (Walqui, 2000, p. 1). Within these multiple contextual factors, motivation is a key determinant in learning an additional language and it was fundamental in my study design and analysis.

Motivation. Historically, the major approaches towards motivation have been perceived as social and psychological (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991). Crookes noted, for example, that "Motivation has been consistently linked with attitudes toward the community of speakers of the target language, with an interest in interacting with such speakers, and with some degree of self-identification with the target community" (Crookes & Schmidt, 1991, p. 470). Such links to self and community mean that motivation can take on different forms-integrative and instrumental- and play different roles in the context of learning another language. As Gardner (2001) stated, "There are many different situations in which second language acquisition can take place, and it

is reasonable to assume that the context will have an influence on the relative degree of success of the individual concerned" (p. 1).

Integrative and instrumental motivation. Gardner (1985) viewed motivation in the additional language learning context as " the extent to which the individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity" (p. 10). Gardner's most influential model of language learning motivation in the early sixties through the eighties was the *Socio-Educational Model* (Gardner 1985), which he has continued to revise. In this model, Gardner (1985) distinguished between two kinds of motivation: integrative and instrumental; and, he placed much more emphasis on the former rather than the latter. Integrative motivation refers to a learner's effort and desire to at least communicate or at most integrate (or even assimilate) with the members of the target language. Gardner (2001) continued to explain:

> Since integrativeness involves emotional identification with another cultural group, the Socio-Educational Model posits that it will be reflected in an integrative orientation toward learning the second language, a favorable attitude toward the language community, and an openness to other groups in general (i.e., an absence of ethnocentrism) (p.8).

Gardner (2001) asserted that his model [Socio-Educational] "can be silent with respect to other attributes to the motivated individual, but clearly an integratively motivated individual, like any other motivated individual, exhibits a number of characteristics" (p. 13). Still, it is clear that integratively motivated individuals have significant goals in addition to integration with the other community; they have specific aspirations, and they make attributions concerning their successes

and failures (Gardner, 2001). In addition, there can be other factors for motivation not directly related to integrative motivation. Therefore, there may be instrumental reasons contributing to motivation (Dornyei, 2009). Instrumental motivation refers to more functional reasons for learning the language such as getting a better job, a higher salary or passing an examination (Gardner, 1985). Dornyei (2009) brought another facet to Gardner's (1985) theory in his critique of integrative motivation, in which he began by pointing out growing concerns with the theoretical content of this concept. Dornyei (2009) argued,

> There have been no obvious links to the new cognitive motivation concepts that have been emerging from motivational psychology (such as goal theories or self-determination theories) and partly because the label 'integrative' was rather limiting, and quite frankly did not make too much sense in many language learning environments (p. 10).

Consequently, moving beyond integrativeness meant a large scale investigation in Hungary which resulted in Dornyei (2009) calling for a rethinking of the concept of integrativeness.

For 15 years Dornyei (2009) led a research team in Hungary to administer a longitudinal survey amongst teenage language learners to gauge changes in the population's international-orientation. The survey involved over 13,000 participants who reflected on their attitudes towards five different target languages (English, German, French, Italian and Russian)" (Dornyei, 2009, p.26). Integrativeness was found to play a major role in L2 motivation, bridging the effects of all of the other attitudinal/motivational variables on the two standard measures - language choice and intended effort to study the new language.

These theories on motivation led me to ask the following questions about my participants. To what extent were the four participants in this study motivated to learn English on PEI? Was their motivation integrative or instrumental? In addition to the traditional theories of motivation in language learning, were there more influences on the participants' learning processes- influences like investment, identity and power relations? These questions led to the study's research conversation questions as part of the data design and collection discussed in Chapter 3.

Investment. Norton (2000) ascertained that existing L2 motivation theories neglect to account for the fact that language learners' social histories and personal identities have significant influences on L2 learning processes. Therefore, Norton (2000) reconceptualised motivation as investment in order to encapsulate the complex relations between identity, power and language learning. Proposing a theory of social identity in her longitudinal case study of the language learning experiences of immigrant women in Canada, Pierce (1993) assumed that power relations play a crucial role in social interactions between language learners and target language speakers. It is through language that a person negotiates a sense of self within and across different places at different times, and it is through language that a person gains entrance or access or is denied into the social world of the target speakers. Language is comprehended with reference to its social meaning.

Pierce (1993) helped teach a 6-month ESL course to a group of recent immigrants at an Ontario College in Canada. After the course was completed, Pierce (1993) invited five women (one from Vietnam; two from Poland; one from Czechoslovakia; and one from Peru) to participate in a longitudinal case study of their language learning experiences in Canada through a diary study, questionnaires and personal interviews. These women had to deal with learning a new language and living in a new culture. Losing the status they once had in their home

countries was the result of not being able to communicate with people in the target language group on a daily basis. The jobs and previous education they had at home had no value in Canada due to the English language barrier. Their social status had changed as did their professional identity-they were suddenly less powerful than native English speakers and even with those with less education. Although Pierce's (1993) participants were adults, her study led me to wonder about the social status of the four participants in my study. Did their social status or identity change in some way due to a power imbalance in their schools or communities? If so, were they more or less invested in their new language and culture?

Identity negotiation and construction. Norton (2000) suggested that during the process of language acquisition, learners negotiate and create a new identity. Norton (2000) connected some of this identity negotiation and construction to living in a new country, a new social setting with new social rules. Her study reiterated the importance and impact of the social distance between the language learning group and the target group which has a major influence on how invested the language learner is in the new language and culture. Pierce's (1993) study was influential in the establishment of her notion of investment when looking at theoretical ideas around motivation. This idea of investment recognizes the language learner as a multidimensional individual with a complex social history.

At the time of her study Pierce (1993) had not found a comprehensive discussion of the term investment; her conception was formed by her reading in social theory. She argued that her ideas are most understood by making reference to the economic metaphors that Pierre Bordieu (1977) used in his work. Bordieu purposes cultural capital to reference the knowledge and modes of thought that characterize different classes and groups in relation to specific sets of social forms. Inspired by the work of Bordieu (1977), Norton argued that if learner's "invest" in

the target language, they do so with the understanding that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources, which will then increase the value of their cultural capital and social power. Drawing on Bourdieu's (1977) notions of linguistic capital and power, Norton (1995) challenges traditional theories of motivation that she believes are too simplistic for explaining why some learners of English succeed and others do not.

Previous studies (Buch, 2007; Duff, 2002; Norton, 2000) viewed the idea of motivation as a predominant factor when learning a new language differently than originally perceived. Unlike traditional ideas of motivation (Gardner, 1985) which often reveal the language learner to have a fixed, historical personality, the construct of investment reveals that the language learners often have complex identities, which change across time and space. 'Investment' explains why a motivated learner may nevertheless engage in practices of resistance. As an example, if first language English speakers are racist, sexist, or homophobic, a motivated language learner may have little investment in the larger practices of the classroom or in the community. While motivation is primarily a psychological construct, investment is a sociological construct. As well, I sought to give secondary EAL learner's a voice (through their words, artwork, and photographs) with which they could share their experiences, including their motivation and investment (or lack thereof) to learn English in PEI schools and integrate into PEI communities.

Coercive power relations. Cummins (2007) extended Norton's (2000) notion of power relations and investment; he noted that evidence for the relevance of power relations to educational achievement is evident in the well-established relationship between Socioeconomic Status (SES) and achievement. It is not hard to see that economic power often equals educational opportunities. Those with money may afford the better home in better neighbourhoods with better- equipped schools with more experienced teachers. In contrast,

those without money, experiencing the consequences of poverty may also be dealing with other influences such as racism and coercive relations of power. In this example, racism refers to the exercise of discursive, economic, or physical power against individuals or groups defined on the basis of skin pigmentation or other physical or racial features. Coercive relations of power such as racism, sexism, and homophobia include examples of form exerted by the dominant group to the subordinate group.

Although not all immigrants experience subordination in a new dominant culture, most do. In fact, most immigrants who come from refugee situations will automatically become the subordinate group and experience coercive relations of power (Cummins, Brown & Sayers, 2007), which has also been identified in previous studies (MacNevin 2011; Stewart, 2007). As a result, there is a place for understanding how these factors all contribute to power relations, identity, sense of belonging, social integration and academic achievement in a language learner's life. Some immigrants may choose to come to Canada while others may have no choice, affecting their positions of power and ambivalence towards true assimilation. Fortunately, coercive relations of power can be resisted and reversed and more collaborative relations of power can be promoted.

In the past and unfortunately in the present in certain areas, schools have acted as dominant group institutions, requiring that subordinated groups deny their cultural identity and give up their languages as a necessary condition for success in the community or society of the dominant group (mainstream). Furthermore, the acceptance sought after by adolescents and newcomers at any age is also somewhat comparable to inequitable power relations that block integration. To what degree was this the experience of my four participants?

Collaborative relations of power. Language learners whose school experiences consist of collaborative relations of power participate confidently in instruction and learning activities. Their sense of identity is affirmed as they know that their voices will be heard and respected within the classroom. Newcomers who are actively involved in their learning have louder voices as opposed to silenced or forced ones. The school experiences of newcomers learning English are crucial environments where first language speaking peers and teachers are in the position to provide opportunities for inclusion, socialization, support and confidence. I was curious to know to what degree collaborative power relations represented the experiences of my participants.

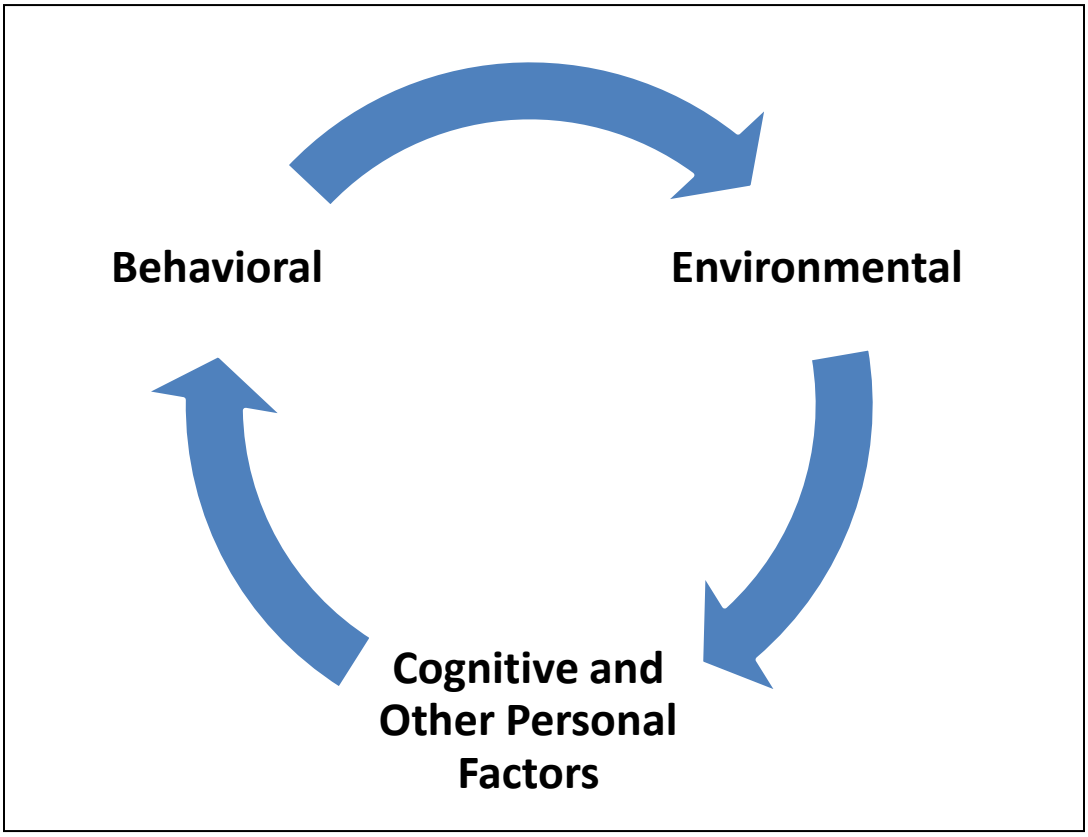
The environment. EAL acquisition theorists have struggled to conceptualize the relationship between the individual language learner and the language learning context. The language learner can often be described with respect to his/her home, school and community environments as well as his/her motivation in and investment towards learning an additional language. My study looked at the participants' schools but also their home and community environments as variables to learning English. Research questions, then, focussed on the learning environment in terms of students' perceptions and whether or not the environment was conducive to successful English language acquisition. As well, the participants' environments would include their social relationships with their friends, neighbors, and teachers, therefore, questions about friendships and connections were asked to participants and an extension of these socialization factors were informed by Albert Bandura's (1977) Social Cognitive Theory (SCT).

Social cognitive theory. Bandura's (1977) SCT serves as a complementary framework for the design of my study and for its data analysis, especially because Norton's (2000) theory of investment does not really consider emotional and socio-cognitive factors such as perceived self-efficacy and sense of belonging. SCT is rooted in the broader theories of human development

itself, which encompasses stages of learning, namely in this study, the learning or acquisition of language. Being a life-long process, human development is affected by changes in the psychosocial functioning of adults, youth and children. Development is not a monolithic process and it encompasses many different types of patterns of change (Bandura, 1986). Such changes may reveal themselves in various aspects of human capabilities and behaviour. Human behaviour is often justified in terms of one-sided determinism. Due to unidirectional causation, such behaviour is influenced and controlled by environmental factors or by internal dispositions. Social cognitive theory leans toward a model of causation involving what Bandura (1989) calls *reciprocal determinism.*

In this model of reciprocal determinism, behavior, cognition and other personal factors, and environmental influences all operate as interacting determinants that influence each other bidirectionally. This does not mean the differing sources of influence happen equally or simultaneously—some influences may carry different weight and occur at different times. These influential factors are integrated, as an individual tries to understand him or herself in a given situation. These factors create one single component within SCT known as self- efficacy which suggests reciprocal interactions among the factors mentioned above and including physiological, cognitive and affective variables (Bandura, 1986). In this theory, human beings have the ability to shape their environment rather than passively react to it. Therefore, with reference to the interaction among these factors, individuals' beliefs in their capabilities to perform a task (e.g., self- efficacy) determine the efforts and engagement they exert for the task (Bandura, 1986).

Figure: 1 Triadic Reciprocality in Social Cognitive Theory: Interaction between Factors (Bandura, 1986).



Self-Efficacy.

The home environment. "The self-beliefs that individuals use to exercise a measure of control over their environments include self-efficacy beliefs—beliefs in one's capability to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations" (Bandura, 1997, p. 2). The development of such beliefs begins in the first environment—the home.

In the home environment, parents or caregivers often have great influence on a child's self efficacy. Initially, children gain self-knowledge of their capabilities in broader areas of functioning. They have to develop, appraise and test their physical capabilities, their social

competencies, their linguistic skills, and their cognitive skills for comprehending and managing the many situations they encounter daily. These early exploratory and play activities provide opportunities for the growth of infants' basic skills. While developing their capabilities during this period, most of the infants' gratification and well-being must be mediated by adults (Bandura, 1997). Due to their physical dependency, infants learn how to influence the behavior of others around them with their verbal and social behavior. As a result, efficacy experiences in personal control are crucial to the early development of social and cognitive competence.

Parents who are responsive to their infants' communicative behavior, and who create opportunities for efficacious actions by providing an enriched physical environment and permitting freedom of movement for exploration, often have infants who progress in their social and cognitive development (Bandura, 1997). In turn, this parental responsiveness increases cognitive competences and capabilities which produce greater parental responsiveness in a process of reciprocal causation (Bradley, Caldwell, & Elardo, 1979). Acquisition of language provides children with the symbolic means to reflect on their experiences and what others tell them about their capabilities and, thus, to begin to gain self-knowledge of what they can and cannot do.

Perceived self-efficacy. Bandura (1995) indicates that one's perceived self-efficacy can play a role in how he/she views his/her learning environment. Those with low perceived self-efficacy will avoid situations which they feel go beyond their coping capabilities or will shy away from difficult tasks which they may view as a personal threat. How students perceive themselves is often a result of how they believe their teachers see them. Knowing that one's perceived self- efficacy is connected to his/her actual progress, one may wonder if a low perceived self-efficacy will lead to low progress. Perceived self- efficacy, then, could be a

determinant as to a learner's motivation or investment as well as how one negotiates his/her identity when learning another language. As a result, the research conversations included questions about the participants' relationships to their teachers, which in turn affected how the learners saw themselves.

The learning environment. Since self- efficacy has been shown to affect the learning environment, it stands to reason that there is a definite connection in the development of self efficacy in learning an additional language, making this theory particularly relevant to my study. Learners' beliefs in their capabilities affect performance tremendously. Learners' beliefs can predict performance better than their real ability (Bandura 1997). Moreover, this belief can be affected by the imbalances of power where children are socialized through traditional educational discourse (white Anglo-Saxon), which dictate the discourse the EAL learners must assimilate to the positively evaluated majority and language (Freeman & Freeman, 2009). An EAL student's behaviours and performance can be highly influenced by what he/she thinks, believes, and feels. Consequently, I aimed to explore what four high school immigrant students thought, believed and felt by giving them a voice to express how they see their experiences in school and in their communities.

Identity and the learning environment. This study examined and understood the multiple factors that enhance or cause barriers for young EAL learners in PEI schools and community. In adolescence, one's identity is very much tied to one's social sense of belonging. This can further determine how adolescents see themselves, meaning their self- confidence and efficacy may be affected by their peers' reactions to them and whether or not they are accepted into their peer group. For an adolescent who has moved to a new country, new school and does not speak the language of instruction, he or she may easily become isolated and internalize negative feelings of

rejection or neglect from his/her peers when communication breaks down due to the language barrier. Students learning a new language are vulnerable; they don't feel good about the fact that they cannot express their knowledge, personality, or intelligence. Whether teachers are teaching language or content, teachers need to support, encourage and affirm the identities of their students (Bandura, 1996) and create a place for them to belong. Cummins (2001) examines the importance of how student identities are negotiated between teachers and students. Young people forge identities through daily negotiations at school, home, community, work and with friends. Tilleczek (2011) discusses how young people are always in the process of becoming who they will be as they feel, experience, react, and negotiate their place while intersecting identities within families, schools, political systems, friendships, and communities. Tilleczek (2008) discusses the importance of the power of stories, painting, narrative biographies, etc., to render true descriptions and understandings about life when other words are woefully inadequate. Her use of such art-informed and narrative modes of inquiry gave me inspiration and ideas about how to include my students' photographs of their lived experiences on PEI. I describe this data collection method in more detail in the next chapter.

Summary

Chapter 2 has provided a review of the relevant literature on additional language learning, its misconceptions, and the factors that contribute to making a language learner successful. Gardner's (1985) traditional constructs of motivation-integrative and instrumental-led the discussion to Norton's (2000) more current concept of investment in language learning. Becoming invested in a new language and culture, according to Norton (2000) depends upon how one negotiates or constructs his/her identity within the new target language environment and is influenced by the power relations at play. Consequently, the negotiation and construction of

one's identity as well as coercive and collaborative forms of power relations were also reviewed in this chapter (Cummins, 2001, 2007; Cummins, Brown & Sayers 2007; Tilleczek, 2011). The relationship between motivation, investment, identity, and power relations and the role of the environment in language learning led to the study's conceptual foundation, informed by Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory and Bandura's (1997) Social Learning Theory. The conceptual foundation and the scholarly literature on additional language acquisition informed the data design and collection, specifically the questions asked in the research conversations, which are described in more detail in the next chapter-*Methodology and Methods*.

Chapter 3-Methodology and Methods

The following section will outline the methodological framework and research methods used in my study. I will describe the four participants that were interviewed for this study and how I recruited them, collected background information on them, and how I went about collecting my data for this study. I will also describe my preparation for conducting the research conversations as well as the location and purpose behind research conversation sites. Finally, this section includes how I conducted my data analysis and its resulting key themes.

Methodological Framework

The aim of this thesis was to hear high school immigrant students' perspectives through research conversations about their experiences in PEI schools and communities. My goal was to obtain a better understanding of the underlying factors that made learning and living on PEI a challenge and/or a joy. I believe that a qualitative research approach lends itself to listening to participants' stories in an attempt to learn what it has been like for them coming to PEI to learn and live. As the qualitative researcher, I sought to talk with the participants about their experiences and to examine their responses carefully and closely look for any commonalities in the factors that contributed to their challenges and/or successes learning and living on PEI. Listening to these newcomers' stories, with common and different themes, will provide readers with some insight into what these newcomers experience when they come to Prince Edward Island. In addition, my intention was to best understand my participants through their realities, which for them as teenagers, is their life at school and in their communities.

As a result, inspiration for this study resulted from Max Van Manen's (1997) focus on lived experiences:

> ...the everyday lived experience of human beings as they find themselves in the world and as they give actual shape to their world. Special attention is paid to the methodological function of anecdotal narrative in human science research, the approaches are offered for structuring the research text in relation to the particular kinds of questions being studied (p. 20).

As high school students are considered "youth," my study also falls in line with previous studies regarding youth and their experiences. Kate Tilleczek (2011) cites institutional ethnography as one of the approaches which is of special interest in youth studies and which influenced my study design and data collection methods and analysis:

> The critical tenant of institutional ethnography is the work that goes into mapping social relations to show how the everyday experiences of young people are subjected to a host of social and ruling relations. Their personal and individual experiences of problems are then examined in the social contexts in which they arise. These social contexts are made plain through interviews, analysis of texts and documents, and/or observations (p. 40).

My study, like Tilleczek's (2011) studies of youth, started with identifying the challenges and issues within young people's lives and developed into inquiry from their lived experiences. I also aimed to look at the social settings and relations pertaining to immigrant youths' everyday living. The qualitative nature of this study "permit[ted] one to understand the world as seen by the respondents" (Patton, 2002, p.12). Moreover, qualitative methods allow inquiry into selected issues in great depth with careful attention to detail and context. Patton (2002) reminds researchers that human relations specialists tell us that we can never fully understand the experience of another person. One could look at a narrow range of experiences for a larger

number of people or a broader range of experiences for a smaller number of people. Consequently, my study aimed to look at a broader range of school and community experiences for a smaller number of participants—four immigrant high school students.

The small number of participants allowed this novice researcher to feasibly conduct in-depth and rich research conversations which resulted in a relatively detailed and deep understanding, appreciation and knowledge of participants' experiences. As Patton (2002) indicates: "Qualitative methods typically produce a wealth of detailed information about a much smaller number of people and cases [which increases such a small sample size may reduce generalizability]" (p. 14). Generalizability is not the purpose of qualitative research, but rather to reiterate, it is the provision of in-depth analysis of a small group of people. Although the findings in a qualitative study are not generalizable in a statistical sense, their findings can be transferable (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Therefore the qualitative findings of this study cannot produce generalizations of what every secondary EAL student may experience in PEI schools and communities. The findings were specific to four participants' individual experiences in their respective island schools and communities. Having such insight into these experiences may be of benefit to Islanders and educators in taking responsibility for making their communities and schools more welcoming. In the concluding chapter of the thesis, I also examine the degree to which the findings of this qualitative study, complement other related qualitative studies.

Participants' backgrounds and selection of students. Initially, the four students were invited from a larger randomly selected group: secondary EAL learners at an urban school as well as from a rural school on PEI. From this larger randomly selected group, a purposeful sample of four participants, ranging in ages from 15 to 17, had expressed interest and was selected. The selection of this sample size was to be reflective of experiences in PEI and to

create a small manageable sample for my thesis. This purposeful sample included two students from a rural school (one male and one female) and two students from an inner city, urban school (one male and one female); I also chose participants to reflect a variety of cultural and educational backgrounds as well as a variety of language levels, immigrant entry status, and length of time in Canada (see Table 1 below):

Table 1: Profile Overview of EAL Participants

Participant	Gender/Age	Country	First Language	English Level	Entry Status
Cathy	Female/15	Taiwan	Mandarin	High Intermediate	Permanent Resident
Majid	Male/15	Lebanon	Arabic	High Intermediate	Permanent Resident
Mary	Female/17	Colombia	Spanish	Advanced	Permanent Resident
Pete	Male/15	China	Mandarin	Beginner	Permanent Resident

As Table 1 indicates, Cathy and Pete were from Asia (Taiwan and China); Majid was from Lebanon while Mary was from Colombia. All of the participants were permanent residents of Canada which meant they were not classified to have a refugee background. However, two of the participants, Majid and Mary, reported that their safety, due to political unrest (Lebanon) and high crime rate (Colombia), was one of the primary reasons for leaving their home countries. Two of the participants, Cathy and Majid, possessed a high intermediate level of English language proficiency; Mary had an advanced level while Pete had a beginner level. Being at the beginner level in his English language proficiency, Pete's interview was translated to him through an interpreter who spoke his first language (L1) of Mandarin. Mary and Cathy had been

in Canada over a year, while the others had recently arrived. Cathy and Pete lived with their mothers only, while their fathers were back in China working. Majid was here with both parents, immediate and extended family members. Mary was here with her older brother and they lived with their uncle (and their aunt was soon to arrive).

Participants were chosen from an urban school and a rural school approximately 15 kilometres outside of the Charlottetown. I chose participants from an inner city school in Charlottetown because of its multicultural nature. At the time of this study in December 2009, this school had the largest number of immigrants of all secondary schools on PEI, with 167 EAL learners, almost 20% of its population was immigrant and refugee (EAL/FAL Database, 2013). I also chose this school because I had taught there for 9.5 years, the latter few years spent teaching English as an Additional Language classes. I believed this experience was valuable in my recruitment of secondary EAL learners and speaking to the EAL classes in person to share my research and invite anyone who was interested to participate. Having taught these classes, I had a great understanding of the school culture, its history, and the operation (and significant development) of the EAL courses and curriculum. Consequently, I had a good appreciation for and understanding of what EAL students' experiences had been. Also, since the principal of the school knew me and my passion for EAL learners, he was very supportive of my study. Working with students in one's former school was not an issue for me because I had not taught there for almost four years, and I had never taught any of the students in my study. At the time of data collection, I was on secondment to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. As well as choosing an inner city school, I also chose to select students from a rural school which had a very low number of EAL learners. This rural high school, located

outside of Charlottetown, had six EAL students (EAL/FAL Database 2013) at the time of this study in December 2009 which was less than 1% of the total population.

The rationale behind choosing one inner city school and one rural school included recruiting participants from different environments. The EAL population at the rural school consisted of six EAL learners, two of whom were from China, and two who were from Columbia. In contrast, the inner city school consisted of an EAL population of 167 over 50% of whom where Chinese at the time of this study in December 2009. (EAL/FAL Database, 2013). EAL students here were part of a much larger international student group, one with such high numbers which warranted EAL secondary courses offered in a more traditional classroom setting, meaning a teacher offering an EAL course in English as additional language to a group of students at the same English language proficiency level in listening and speaking, reading and writing at the beginner, intermediate, and high intermediate levels. (see Appendix K).

Although all EAL students across the province would have access to EAL courses, taking one in a rural school, due to very low numbers of students, would mean that the course would be delivered by an EAL itinerant teacher in a one-on-one setting in collaboration with a resource teacher because the EAL itinerant may not be at the rural school every day. Therefore, the EAL student in an EAL-highly populated school may have a very different experience than an EAL student in an EAL-lowly populated school. For example, the two students interviewed from the rural school were the only Chinese or Colombian students in their classes whereas at the inner city school, the participants often had at least two or more international students in their other classes and sometimes, as with the student from Taiwan, one or more students who spoke the same first language. In addition, their EAL classes had at least 10 students enrolled and they were taught the courses in a traditional classroom setting.

Design Strategy

The design strategy consisted of two sets of semi-structured research conversations which consisted of open-ended questions and an openness to whatever emerged. Drawing on Tilleczek's (2011) critical strategies for youth studies, I aimed to emulate the following research processes:

> …starting from the experiences and locations of young people and their families; recognizing moments and possibilities of active negotiation by youth; and, taking seriously the experiential and biographical identities of youth (p. 42).

As explained in Chapter 1, I used the terms "research conversations" which I felt more accurately described the data collection. A conversation connotes a more casual, informal dialogue or turn taking as opposed to the word "interview" which tends to conjure up more of a formal discussion with structured questions. As well, the research conversations were also more conducive to making the participants feel at ease due to potential uneasiness in telling stories or narratives-narratives which are often used "to provide a space for youth to express their experiences and voices, and serve as a method for collecting important data, information and descriptions" (Tilleczek, 2011, p.122).

Data Methods and Collection

I initially received ethical approval from the Research Education Board (REB) at the University of Prince Edward Island to conduct this study (see Appendix L). Following this, I requested permission from the Eastern School District (ESD). Then, my study was explained to teachers (EAL and EAL itinerants) at both the urban and rural schools. I also spoke to the EAL secondary classes at the urban school and explained the purpose of the study, the gaps in

previous research, and most importantly the passion behind the idea of giving EAL learners on PEI a wider audience to express themselves and have their voices heard. All of the four students chose to participate voluntarily. They understood they would receive a $25 gift card to Indigo bookstore as a token of my appreciation for participating in the study. All of the above information was explained in English to those four expressing interest. However, for one of the students from China whose English was at the beginner level, there was also a translator provided to ensure he understood the study and the consent form which would clearly indicate his participation in the study was voluntary.

After signing their consent forms and providing contact information, I contacted each of the participants individually to arrange a mutually convenient time to complete the first of two research conversations as well as to ask about the provision of a translator for the beginning English level student from the rural school. Three of the participants chose to meet after school, with the exception of one who chose to meet on a Saturday. Three of the four participants chose their respective schools as the research conversation site due to convenience for them (i.e., the urban students could walk home afterwards and the rural students could arrange for a later pick up from a parent or guardian). One of the students from the rural school chose to meet at my work place (the Atlantic Technology Centre) because he chose to meet on a Saturday when I did not have access to the schools.

Research conversations. Each research conversation lasted 60 minutes, and the second interview happened one month after the first one. Upon meeting the participants for their first research conversation, I reiterated the process of audio-recording their responses which they would receive initially by email, and then as a hard copy for verification at our second research conversation. If they felt something was incorrect they would have a chance to correct it. The

verification strategy was a form of member checking (Patton, 2002) designed to enhance trustworthiness of the research findings. The responses from the first conversation also informed my planning for the second conversation.

The first research conversation consisted of questions only (see Appendix G); whereas, the second one involved photographs in addition to questions (see Appendix H). Participants were interviewed after classes in an available classroom space at their high school. The first research conversation lasted approximately 60 minutes. Research conversations were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim by an experienced transcriptionist and then reviewed with the participants at the beginning of the second research conversation. During the last five minutes of the first research conversation, I invited the participants to describe their experiences on PEI through visual representations (i.e., photography or artwork) for the second research conversation.

Preparation for the second research conversation began with a description and discussion of the words “representation” and “symbol" for students (translated where needed for lower English level proficient students) since they would possibly be photographing, drawing or writing about symbols or objects which represented their lived experiences learning and living on PEI. Then, participants were asked how they would prefer to visually represent their lives on PEI. These representations could be through taking photos, making a collage, drawing a picture or writing a poem. While all four participants chose to take photos of their experiences, two of the four students photographed art work they had previously done. Participants were encouraged to use their creativity and confidence in their selection, which they felt best, described their lived experiences at school and in their community. They either emailed me their photos prior to our second research conversation or downloaded them onto a USB flash drive and took them to the

second research conversation. Participants were given four weeks to complete and send me these photographic representations completed before I met with them again one month from the initial research conversations to discuss their representations.

During the second set of research conversations, participants were asked a series of questions where they described their photographs, why they photographed the image they did, and what it meant to them in terms of their experiences in school and on PEI (see Appendix H). As language can be a barrier for those who cannot express themselves effectively in English, photos can capture what the participants' words may fail to do:

> Language can be a barrier in using English effectively to capture one's experience-adjectives, English words fail to capture the way in which I experience. What belongs to my inner life seems quite beyond words. No one can feel what I feel; see what I see (Max Van Manen, 1997, p. 20).

In fact, using photographs and other art forms as data collection is not new. Hurworth (2003) noted that in early anthropological research, Franz Boas, was one of the first to use photo-interviewing while studying the culture of the Tobriand Islands where he would show participants photos to ask them about a particular ritual. Similarly, *photo novella* or photo stories is the most applicable form of photo-interviewing I have used in this study since this method encourages participants to talk about day-to-day routines and events and discuss life from their own lens:

> A key component of the *photo novella* process is dialogue where participants show their photographs and talk about their significance and meaning. The grounding of the images in real experience is the key...*photo novella* is meant to be a tool of empowerment

> enabling those with little money, power or status to communicate to policy makers where change can occur (Hurworth, 2003, p. 2).

Photovoice is a more recent photo-interviewing term, replacing *photo novella* as a process by which people can identify, represent and enhance their community through a specific photographic technique (Hurworth, 2003). Graziano (2011) used documentary photography and storytelling or *photovoice* to identify the educational realities of 16 Hispanic students in the Southwest USA. Graziano (2011) noted that *photovoice* was a form of qualitative research that used documentary photography and storytelling. *Photovoice* puts a camera in the hands of the participants to see their lives, community and concerns. It sets out to present the point of view of the person holding the camera (Graziano, 2011).

Hence, the second 60-minute research conversation began by asking each participant to verify his/her transcripts of the first conversation (see Appendix H). As well, participants were asked to photograph objects since I would not be able to use photographs of people without obtaining additional consent. However, some students felt their friendships and family played such a huge role in the success of their experiences both in school and in the community, they still chose to photograph friends or family. Although I did not use these photographs which were often group/class or family shots (the latter of which were out of the country). I still asked participants about such photos and included their responses in this study because of their significance.

All data extrapolated and the equipment used for this study was secured in locked cabinets. Equipment used for this study included a digital voice recorder, computer, USB, and digital cameras. Each interview was coded, noting recurring patterns in what participants

described as their challenges or successes. These patterns presented themselves in broader key themes which are described more below in the next section.

Data analysis. Patton (2002) recognized the fact that "data gathering and analysis flow together in fieldwork; there is usually no definite, fully anticipated point at which data collection stops and analysis begins. One process flows into the other" (p. 323). Guba (1978) supported Patton's (2002) recognition as he had explained fieldwork as moving back and forth between the discovery mode and the verification mode like a wave.

Data were analysed by initially reading, and then discovering and analysing participants' responses to my questions from both sets of research conversations as well as any additional field notes I had taken. Responses were examined and coded into sub-categories: leaving home, arriving on PEI, school in home country; school on PEI, life in PEI, friendships, successes and barriers. The notes from these research conversations, including what participants said about their photographs (i.e., what the image they chose to photograph meant to further describe their experiences on PEI), were also coded into patterns, falling under the commonalities and differences of their school and living experiences. Finally, these similarities and differences among the responses were assessed and compared with students' language levels, socio-economic status, educational and personal experiences, and length of time in Canada. This data analysis led to the key themes that emerged and are identified in Chapter 4–*Findings*.

Trustworthiness. In qualitative inquiry, the human being is the main instrument of data collection, therefore, the researcher is required to carefully reflect on, deal with, and report potential sources of bias and error (Patton, 2002). This study aimed at producing high-quality qualitative data that are credible, trustworthy, authentic and balanced about the phenomenon

being studied, and fair to the participants being studied. Knowing that my students knew I was a teacher, I was empathic to how this may make them feel, so I reassured them their responses would have no impact on their schooling or grades whatsoever. I ensured my impartiality and emphasized the authenticity of the process. I had an appreciation for each response; a reflexive consciousness about my own perspective and an appreciation for the perspectives of others. As the qualitative researcher, I was interested in deeply understanding the specific cases of these students within a particular context (school and community). Although each participant was a newcomer to Canada, their experiences varied. I was objective as possible in the sense that I closely coded each of the participant's verbatim responses, looking for patterns as I identified recurring words, thoughts, perceptions and reflections. For example, all four participants often cited missing one or more of their parents and used the words: *sad, lonely, miss* repeatedly. While these were commonalities, there were also differences in their responses, such as their reasons for coming to PEI (i.e., one participant, Majid, moved due to civil unrest and safety concerns in his home country, while another, Pete, moved to learn English and attend a "good" Canadian university). Taking account of multiple realities, multiple perspectives, and multiple interests are part of being balanced, fair, and conscientious as an emphasis is placed on trustworthiness and authenticity (Lincoln and Guba, 1986).

The overall intention of the data analysis in this study was to move beyond labelling processes and procedures to find methodological language that best described my own inquiry processes and procedures, what I bring to them, and how I have reflected on them, and then let the readers be influenced by the intellectual, meaningful, methodological rigor, value and usefulness of the results.

Summary

The ultimate goal of this thesis was to give four high school immigrant students a voice. My aim was to obtain a deeper understanding of the underlying factors that made learning and living on PEI a challenge or a joy. Using a qualitative approach lends itself to listening to participants' stories in an attempt to learn what it has been like for them coming to PEI to learn and live. The intention was to come to know my participants through their "experiential reality of their life worlds" (Max Van Manen, 1997, p. 20). By partaking in the research conversations, speaking about and photographing objects that represented their experiences on PEI, participants shared their experiences in Prince Edward Island schools and communities. The research conversations helped me understand and learn more about the students' experiences because what the researcher does in qualitative research "depends on the situation, the nature of the inquiry, the characteristics of the setting, and the skills, interests, needs and point of view that you, as an observer, bring to your engagement" (Patton, 2002, p. 330). Therefore through the research conversations, data were collected, coded, and analysed. Then the key themes that emerged were discussed and considered for additional recommendations. The participants' portraits (i.e., their stories) and the key themes that emerged from them are discussed in the next Chapter-*Findings.*

Chapter 4-Findings

This chapter includes the participants' portraits, which were constructed based on the research conversations (see Appendix G) as well as discussion of photographs which were taken by the participants to show what words could not express. The participants chose to photograph places, objects, and images that were significant to the participants in the representation of their experiences in PEI schools and communities (see Appendix H). Similarities and differences among the responses were assessed and compared with students' language levels, socio-economic status, educational and personal experiences and length of time in Canada. This chapter also includes the findings from the participants' portraits-their personal narratives and photographs- which reveal the key themes that emerged from the research conversations: loneliness; isolation; English language level as a barrier; social networking communication; engagement and disengagement; motivation for moving; and, loss of identity, culture and language.

Participants' Portraits

The following section of this chapter consists of the participants' portraits, which are the notes from their responses to the research conversations, including their photographs and discussions about them. For the purpose of anonymity, pseudonyms are used for the participants' real names. Their portraits extend beyond just the pictures as their words create images for the reader as to how these young people see themselves. It was from these research conversation notes that the commonalities and differences of their experiences in PEI schools and communities were extrapolated to form the key themes that are identified in the following section–*Key Themes*–of this chapter. Each portrait begins with a quote from the participant's

research conversation that resonated with me as a quick snapshot of what they were experiencing here on PEI. Often times, these snapshots were sad and disappointing as the sense of loneliness and isolation reflected a great deal of pain for these students. Following the quote, each portrait is organized into the following sub-sections:

- Leaving home;
- Arriving on PEI;
- School in Home Country (i.e. Taiwan, Columbia, Lebanon, China)
- School on PEI;
- Life in PEI Community (Charlottetown, St. Catherine's, Cornwall,)
- Friendships
- Successes
- Barriers

Cathy.

I walk to school by myself, go to my locker and then to class. I have lunch with my international friends, go to my locker after class and walk home alone. My friends are in my classes...

~Cathy

Leaving home. Cathy was 15 and in grade 10 at a Charlottetown high school at the time of this research conversation. She arrived on PEI in September 2008 from Taipei, Taiwan. Cathy lives in Charlottetown with her older brother, who was studying at Holland College, and her mother, who was studying at Study Abroad Canada, a Canadian Language Institute for newcomer adults learning English. Cathy's father is still in Taiwan conducting business. When asked about how she felt about leaving Taiwan, Cathy said that she was sad since she would

have to live away from her father. Cathy noted it was hard leaving her father. When asked about her father coming to PEI, she said, "He might come to Canada sometime soon."

Prior to coming to PEI, Cathy had been to Canada about seven years ago when she visited Vancouver with her family. Cathy noted that Vancouver is more like Taiwan than PEI, since there were more people there and it was more convenient (she could buy Asian food there), than here on Prince Edward Island. She also said she had friends from home in Vancouver.

Arriving on PEI. When asked about that first fall arrival date on PEI, Cathy first commented that it was "beautiful, but a little bit cold." She described being excited to come to Canada because of a new school, home and people. She also stated that now that she has been here over a little over a year, she missed her family and Taiwanese food the most. Cathy chose to photograph traditional Taiwanese food as part of her photographic series of symbols that were representative of her experiences here. Cathy's choice of her photographing food (see Figures 2 and 3) represents her connection to her home culture and customs. Preparing, eating and sharing a traditional food keeps one connected to home—reminding one through sensory perceptions of tasting and smelling the feeling of home. Making such traditional dishes together is also a way to stay connected to family members in the sharing of a culinary creation. Getting in the kitchen and cooking something that is a family favorite can also be a great stress reliever for people, possibly helping the acculturation process while helping maintain one's identities. Three out of the four participants chose to photograph home cooking.

Figure 2: Cathy–Traditional Chinese Dumplings

Figure 3: Cathy- Traditional Chinese Rolls

Upon reflection of her early days on PEI, Cathy was asked about her initial language assessment at the EAL/FAL Reception Centre (a provincial reception centre under the PEI Department of Education and Early Childhood Development that provides intake and assessment

services for English and French Additional Language children and youth with parental consent for recommendation for EAL/FAL itinerant support which is based on language proficiency test results).[4]

Cathy said she did [was tested in] listening, writing, reading, and some speaking. She remembered being told that she was a "beginner." She felt [the beginner level] was "not very good for me because I need to stay here a long time; study hard." Although Cathy noted she had taken English before in her home country, she felt that she did not do very well. Cathy had taken English as Additional Languages courses 701A (Beginner, Listening and Speaking) and 701B (Beginner, Reading and Writing) as a grade 10 academic language course at a Charlottetown high school whose population at the time of this interview was comprised of over twenty percent English as an additional language students (167 international students enrolled at this inner city school in 2009, EAL/FAL Database, 2013).

***School in Taiwan*.** Cathy described her school in Taiwan as much bigger than the one she was attending here in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. She was mostly with the same group of students as well: "We always stay at the same class and if I have like music, musical and cooking and art, we will move to another class, but mostly we have the same class." The same group of students was mostly in her classes for three years. When I asked Cathy about how she likes having to move from class to class, she said she likes having to move from class to class since she can "meet new people and make new friends." When asked about the biggest difference between school on Prince Edward Island and in Taiwan, Cathy said the class is

[4] The English proficiency assessments used by the PEI Department of Education and Early Childhood Development are the Woodcock-Munoz Language Surveys–Revised, Test Forms A and B. www.woodcockjohnson.com.

different. She said she had seven courses in Taiwan and they went all year, whereas here on PEI she has four and for each half the year [semester system]. Also she said the courses in Taiwan were chosen for her and on PEI she had more personal choices when selecting courses.

School on PEI. Cathy's first day of school was at an inner-city intermediate school in Charlottetown, which is a middle school for students from grades 7-9 who are usually 12-14 years of age. When asked about her first day there, she said she did not remember how she felt since it was awhile ago. She did note that she remembered not understanding what the teacher was saying. She knew some words and she used her translator a lot. When asked how it was different starting at high school as opposed to intermediate or middle school as she called it, she stated: "It [senior high] was more helpful for me because I have some questions I can ask my friends."

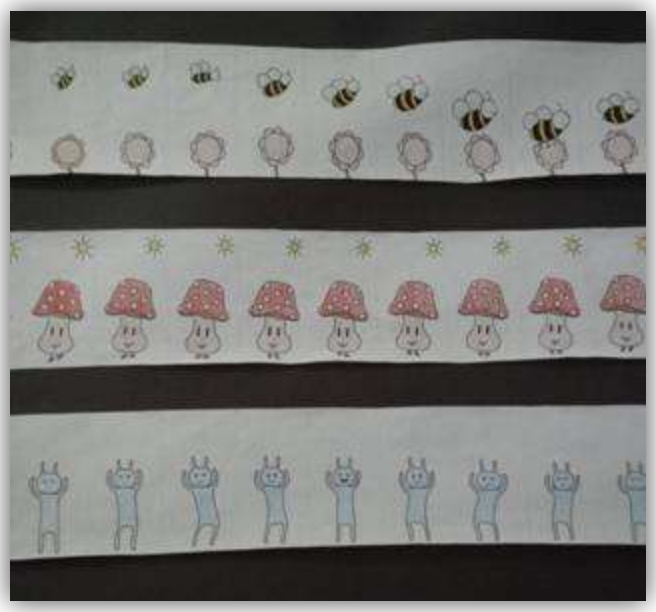
Cathy noted that a typical day for her includes walking to school by herself. Then, Cathy would go to her locker and head to class. At lunch she would go to the cafeteria with her international friends, back to classes for the afternoon before another trip to her locker as she headed out to walk home.

Cathy said that she spoke English in her classes and Taiwanese, and Chinese in the hallways and after class. At the time of data collection, Cathy was taking English (English as an Additional Language (EAL) 701C), math, art and foods. When asked what the most difficult thing was for her in her EAL class, she stated "reading." She said there were some difficult word items, and that saying them was easier [than reading them]. The textbook was difficult. She enjoyed the listening and speaking strands. Cathy said her math class was easy for her, but the challenging part was in reading some questions such as word problems. She liked her art class;

especially the projects involving animation like the project she photographed below (see Figure 4) which she described as *Her Journey*. Cathy explained this project as one where students had to sketch the road they were on in life. Cathy described the arrows as showing her the way on this road. Cathy's third photo she took was another animation project which she called *Moving Friends* (see Figure 5).

Figure 4: Cathy's Artwork–Her Journey

Figure 5: Cathy's Artwork: Cartoon Strip of Moving Friends



In terms of understanding her teachers, Cathy said that she asked the teacher when she finished [explaining]. In her foods class, Cathy was cooking, doing work, and having tests. The work she did was in her textbook. She was cooking mostly Canadian food. As with her other classes, some of the words [vocabulary] were very difficult, especially in the textbook and on tests. She used her translator and she asked her teacher. When asked about what else she did [strategies] to understand the words, she said that she did not ask other students or do anything different other than ask the teacher or use her translator.

In the semester following data collection, Cathy took science, geography and English as an English Language (EAL) 701D (see Appendix K), and gym [physical education]. She was looking forward to gym as she found it more exciting because of the activities she could do, like badminton. When I asked her if she played badminton after school, she said, “No, I just go home.” This differs very much from her life in Taiwan as she would spend time with her friends after school, sharing sweets and heading to Cram school where she would stay until 12 PM.

"Cram" school, was described as what one might consider an after school program in Canada: "Cram school is like you go to regular school/you need to pay money to learn more things, like science and math."

***Life in Charlottetown*.** Cathy noted that she walked home immediately after school and did her homework and studies. In the evenings, she listened to music and she talked to her friends online. She said these friends are international friends from home and from PEI. On the weekends, Cathy spent her time at home. One of Cathy's favorite hobbies was making jewelry.

One piece of jewelry that was very special to Cathy was a necklace (see Figure 6) that her mother had given her when they came to Canada. This necklace was her guardian angel to protect her and keep her safe when her mother was not with her. She took a picture of it and was wearing it during both research conversations.

Figure 6: Cathy's Guardian Angel

Cathy also spent time reading novels and magazines, mostly in English. However, when she spoke at home to her mother or brother, Cathy spoke "half Taiwanese and half Chinese."

Friendships. Cathy's friendships differed a lot more here than they did in Taiwan. When asked about her friends here, she said she had international friends; they were from Taiwan, China, Iran and Mexico. She also said her friends were "in her classes." When asked about friends outside of class; neighbors or any others, she noted firmly "no." Cathy did include pictures of her classmates, the first being her math class working on a Christmas project and a few pictures of her in summer school with some other classmates. These pictures are not shown here due to ethics' approval and ensuring anonymity which was discussed in the *Methods'* section of Chapter 3.

Successes. Cathy would cite her transition from middle school to high school as a successful one since she had entered senior high with the same peer group she had from middle school. She stated that she would sit with "friends" in class and lunch and she hung out with them in the hallways.

***Barriers*.** The initial move from Taiwan to Canada for Cathy was a strenuous one where her adjustment and culture shock were compounded by the detachment from her father who stayed in Taiwan to work. She stated she missed him and "family" on more than one instance in the research conversation. In addition, Cathy stated several times that she really missed Taiwanese food which she photographed. Loneliness, for Cathy, was not just the result of missing family and food in Taiwan, but also her friends. Here in Canada and on Prince Edward Island, Cathy had friends in classes but not outside of them. Outside of her EAL classes, Cathy was isolated academically and socially as she did not have the level of expressive and receptive language to be able to communicate effectively with others. Having friends in her classes who were "international" would also suggest that Cathy, like other EAL students are segregated from

the entire school population; however, this did not come up explicitly in the research conversation.

Cathy explained that sometimes relationships in her EAL classes were hard. She stated that being from Taiwan was often perceived by the other "Chinese" students as something very negative. Being placed in cooperative learning groups with students from China often proved stressful for Cathy as there was a great deal of conflict between students originating from Taiwan and those from other parts of China. Originating from Taiwan, Cathy saw herself as Taiwanese, not Chinese; however students from other parts of China felt strongly that students from Taiwan were from China. Cathy cited the tension and anxiety this evoked in her.

Mary.

They are friendly, but they don't care if you, going out with you, or like hey do you want to go to a movie. Yeah it's different. Different from Colombia.

~Mary

Leaving home. Mary was 17 and attending a rurally located secondary school approximately fifteen minutes from Charlottetown, at the time of this research conversation. This school had a very small English as an Additional Language population of 20 EAL students (EAL/FAL Reception Centre Database) as compared to the inner city school where the population included almost 20% EAL students.

Mary was living in Winnipeg with her aunt and uncle before moving to PEI. So, Mary had been in Winnipeg one year, prior to coming to PEI and Mary said she found Winnipeg cold and big, but nice. When asked how she liked living on PEI to date, Mary responded:

> I like it. At first it was like I didn't want to like come here. Like I don't want to/ I think the first months were really bad. I want to go back, I don't want to stay here. But then I got used to school and like meeting people and I was kind of like, I don't know, thinking different. I think this is good. If I go back to Colombia and have to study and finish high school and then university it would be pretty expensive and we don't have money. We can't work in Colombia until we are eighteen and you won't get a job in Colombia if you don't have university and stuff. It's impossible. I think here is better so why come [go] back.

When asked what she missed the most about Colombia, Mary disclosed that she missed her family the most, especially her mom and dad who stayed in Colombia. She showed me

pictures of her parents which were on her laptop (see Figure 7) that she brought into the second research conversation. Again pictures of parents were not included here due to ethical considerations. Mary commented that keeping in touch with her Colombian friends was very important to her and she did so using social media sites like Face Book. She included this photo (see Figure 7) of her computer as she talked about how important this was to her to communicate with family and friends.

Figure 7: Mary's Social Networking Tool

When Mary attended school in Winnipeg, she took an art class where she was asked to draw what coming to Canada meant to her. She drew and photographed the Canadian flag surrounded by many other flags representing the countries of her international friends in Winnipeg (see Figure 8).

Figure 8: Mary's Artwork- Coming to Canada

Figure 9: Colombia and Mexico

Coming from Colombia, Mary described her hometown, Bereira, as a big city with over one hundred thousand people. Mary's first language is Spanish. When asked about Colombia, Mary recalled her fond memories: "Oh, I love Colombia, like you know, nice people, friends, my family. Yeah, it is really nice."

PEI. Mary arrived on PEI in July of 2009 with her younger brother, Derek (pseudonym), and her uncle. Her aunt, who was still in Winnipeg, would be arriving at the beginning of the school year with her children (Mary's cousins): 13- year old male and a 10-year old female. Mary spoke fondly of her aunt and uncle; although it was apparent that she missed her parents a great deal as she affectionately spoke of them often during the research conversations. At that time, Mary also disclosed that she lived in St. Catherine's, which is approximately fifteen minutes from the high school she attended and about twenty minutes from Charlottetown. She found it a little far away from things and was dependent on her aunt and uncle to drive her places.

Life in St. Catherine's. Mary took a photo of her PEI home (not included to protect her identity), and she spoke of her aunt and uncle very warmly and affectionately:

> I miss them [her parents] like a lot but my aunt and my uncle are like my second dad and my second mom. They love me a lot. So I really don't mind like living with them. I miss my dad and my mom.

Her aunt and uncle have been in Canada for nine years. Her uncle worked for Novartis and her aunt worked at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital as a medical laboratory technologist.

Mary spoke Spanish at home with her brother, aunt, uncle and cousins. She noted the importance of maintaining the first language in the home, "They don't like us speaking English at home. It's [speaking Spanish] more for my cousins they don't want them to forget their Spanish." Mary also noted that her cousins have lived in Canada (Winnipeg) most of their lives (since they were four and one). Mary disclosed later in the conversation that her mother had been in a horrific car accident where her injuries had left her unable to work. Mary's parents

divorced and her father remarried. She also noted that she worried about her mother with her injuries and wished she was there more to support her.

School in Colombia. When asked what she liked the most about her school in Colombia, Mary remarked "my friends." Mary attended a private school for girls in Colombia:

> I went to a private school from kindergarten to like grade three I think and then I for five years and then I went to a private school for a year and then I didn't like it and moved to another private school.

When Mary was asked about what she did not like about the school, she noted the fact that it was all females attending the school. When asked to explain what the difference was between private school and public school: Mary commented, "It is really different. Public school is like all kinds of people, but normally like poor people. When you go to private school almost everyone is studying because they are paying for it."

Friendships. Mary disclosed that she was a lot more social in Colombia. Her friendships were not the same as they were in Colombia. People here on PEI were friendly but that they did not always want to take you on as a friend. My interpretation of this with Mary was that people (meaning her peers at school) were kind and nice to her, but there was a barrier in terms of forming a deeper level of friendship outside of school. In speaking of such friendships, Mary noted:

> They are friendly, but they don't care if you, like going out with you, or like hey do you want to go to a movie. Yeah, it's different. Different from Colombia. I think it is because you know in Colombia what people like and what people do/in Columbia they were like my friends or people like I knew for almost my whole life/we [Colombians]

> have more kinds of parties there. The music were more like dancing and having fun. Here it is more peace and quiet stuff.

Mary also noted she did not have any friends on PEI who spoke Spanish, other than her brother, Derek. When she lived in Winnipeg, there were a few students who spoke Spanish, one of whom was from Mexico. Mary talked about how close they had become since this friend knew her culture and language so it was "just easier." She chose to take a picture of the letter this friend wrote to her, but due to poor quality, it was not included:

> That's from my Mexican friend. She was an exchange student too and misses her family a lot so we become close in situation and get really close and it's like full of pictures of us and stuff. It's about I love you so much and I will be with you all the time even though we are in different countries. You are a really good friend.

Successes. Mary's social nature, communicative English level, and extracurricular interests, like cheerleading, enabled her to integrate into PEI culture in her rural public school and in her community. Mary reiterated that things were very violent in Colombia; Mary noted the peacefulness here. Whether or not this can be attributed to her success, she saw herself living in a "way better" place: "it is so peaceful, like so yeah, and then sometimes I watch it [the news about crime in Colombia] and it is like oh my Gosh. It is so depressing; it is like kind of bad see that. Like here it's really nice/here is way better."

Barriers. Although Mary was very close to her aunt and uncle, she still missed her parents very much. Leaving her badly injured mother in Colombia was very hard for her; she said she was very close to her. Mary was able to chat with both her parents a few times a week online, but she still missed them very much. Although Mary's social and outgoing nature helped

her establish friendships here on PEI, she still missed her Colombian friends and lifestyle. Mary commented on how she initiated conversation, influencing her possibility of integrating on PEI:

> People here are very nice but they have their friends from a long time ago so they are really like 'oh there is a new person here, let's talk to her.' They don't do that. It's not that they do not care, but yeah they don't need it so you have to speak and try to make friends. Like talk to them and say hey I'm Mary so they know you.

Pete.

I was lost. I don't know where my high classroom is, I don't have no more friends, I can't speak English. Too much change every classroom for every course/It is challenge.

~Pete

Leaving home. Pete was a 17 year old male who came to Cornwall, PEI from Shanghai, China in June of 2009 with his mother. Pete noted that his father was still in China, and when we talked about this later in the interview, Pete became quite quiet and fidgety and asked to speak about something else. Pete noted that there are so many people in China and that it is noisy (vehicles) but very modern. Pete and his mom lived in Cornwall, PEI and Pete was in grade 10 at a rural high school outside of Charlottetown. Pete took this photo (see Figure 10) below as he explained how his mother wanted their home to look like a Canadian home with nice things. It was one of the first things she did when they moved into their home in Cornwall.

Figure 10: Creating Home on PEI

PEI. Pete found PEI to be "very beautiful" when he arrived. He felt it was quite relaxed here and "not that different with our lady China". They moved to Cornwall (see Figure 11), which is in rural PEI and approximately 10 kilometers outside of Charlottetown.

Figure 11: Pete's View from His Cornwall Home

Pete talked several times about how much he enjoyed PEI's beauty. He submitted some photos of historical landmarks in Charlottetown. He liked the architecture. The war memorial reminded him of home and that in China as well as in Canada, they recognize soldiers who have fought and died for their country (see Figures 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16).

Figure 12: St. Dunstan's Basilica

Figure 13: Inside St. Dunstan's Basilica

Figure 14: Inside St. Dunstan's Basilica

Figure 15: War Memorial Monument

Figure 16: War Memorial Monument

School on PEI. Pete was enrolled at a rural high school approximately 20 kilometers outside of Charlottetown. There were significantly lower numbers of EAL students in this rural high school—six students (less than 1%)—as compared to 167 students (EAL/FAL Database 2013) in the city high school. Pete's English was at a pre-beginner level; therefore, an interpreter was provided to him for his interview and he accepted.

Pete commented that there was a lot less pressure on PEI (to study) than there was in China. He said that the teachers and students change for every class here (at his rural school) whereas in China the students stayed together in the same classroom and different teachers came in to teach various courses. Pete noted it was not nearly as competitive here and marks are not public in PEI schools. Moreover, Pete described his first day at high school as one where he was lost and had no more friends. When Pete continued to share his experience in a PEI school, he noted that he was in grade 10 but in grade 11 math and he found it very easy. At the time of the research conversation, he was taking carpentry and computer class. When I asked him how it was going, he said computer class was challenging due to the vocabulary used which made it hard to read the manual and operate the equipment. When I asked him what he did when he did not understand, he said that he looked up words in the dictionary, but his interpreter noted: "Sometimes he cannot find the word in the dictionary because sometimes academic word and the meaning, the explanation is also different. He didn't know which meaning can match the question."

School in China. School in China for Pete was equated with a high level of competition he did not initially experience at his rural high school. He talked about the marks being publically displayed in China so everyone knew what everyone else's marks were, and as a result, this placed a lot of pressure on students to succeed and on parents to have their children achieve high academic success in order to be accepted into a "good" university (and in Canada this was McGill or University of Toronto in most cases). There was less time to "play" meaning socializing. Pete talked about this "high pressure" he and other Chinese students have felt:

> From Monday to Friday is a hard time for every student. A lot of homework and high pressure for every students. Only Saturday and Sunday maybe they can play games on the computers and chatting on line with classmate. If they find they are not happy maybe they can speak out to each other to release the pressure.

Life in Cornwall. Pete talked about his life after school. He said he would go home and turn on the computer and maybe he would chat online, play some games and he would also find some part time jobs to deliver the flyers and papers to his communities. Pete valued his education and spent a great deal of time on his studies. He took the photo below, noting it was his study place in the kitchen and in the next photo (see Figures 17 and 18) he shows another study space in the office room which houses his computer.

Figure 17: Pete's Study Space-Kitchen

Figure 18: Pete's Study Space-Office

Friendships. When I asked Pete about his friendships on PEI, he replied, "I have no friends." Pete noted "Culture and language" as reasons why he said he did not have any friends. When I asked him if he had any friends who spoke Chinese, he said, "There is only one student he can speak Chinese." Pete also commented that this student was not in any of his classes. When I asked how other students reacted to him when he spoke to them, he responded, "They are kind and patient, but they don't know what I mean, so the conversation cannot continue. The teacher can sometimes explain something but not the student. So they are patient." Pete noted several times his lack of friends here and that he just talks to his mom. "It is hard for me." Although he never went on to explain this, it would seem that what was hard for him was not having friends here to talk to about the pressures he felt.

Pete was really missing a deeper level of conversation with his friends. He, like all of the other participants, talked to his friends back home on the computer. He felt like he could not relate to the students here: "For example, the local students, they just talk about some TV programs/I don't want to watch it and then sometimes I couldn't understand what they were laughing at and when they explained it, he did not find it funny."

Barriers. One of Pete's biggest barriers was his level of English language proficiency. Being at the pre-beginner level, Pete's basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) were very low (see Appendix I). As a result, he found it very difficult to communicate with people. He often did not understand what others were asking him, and could not express himself orally which inhibited him from maintaining an age-appropriate level of conversation. Pete found that students had less patience than his teachers who would spend a little more time trying to talk to him. Not having friends here and being isolated were also huge barriers for Pete. Pete talked a lot about his friendships in China and his lack of friendships here. When he talked of what he had left behind in China, especially his father, he seemed a little emotional. In addition to missing his father who was still in China, Pete stated he also missed his friends in China as well as his dog (see Figure 19) which he photographed for the second research conversation.

Figure 19: Pete's Puppy in China with Dad

Successes. Pete's biggest success was his relationship with his mother. Being an only child here on PEI with his mom, Pete talked a great deal about the time he spent with his mother and the special conversations and moments they shared. They spent a great deal of time cooking together so Pete chose to submit photos of the food they prepared together (see Figures 20 and 21). Pete seemed to develop a closeness and openness with his mother, which enabled him to talk to her about his feelings.

Figure 20: Pete's and Mom's Sushi

Figure 21: Making Cookies with Mom

Spending time cooking with his mom or talking was a way for Pete to maintain part of his identity, culture and language in the home which was a sharp contrast to the loneliness and isolation he indicated he had felt in school. Talking with mom in Mandarin, their first language, would allow Pete the freedom and ease of talking without trying to find the words (as he had to do in English) to express himself. I would later learn (through one of his teachers) that his involvement in badminton had helped him integrate a little bit more. Pete's personal resolve to learn English in order to communicate (and to help him in other subject areas as well with his level of academic language) would be an asset to him in how he would persevere to become successful in high school, which for him meant achieving very high marks in order to receive acceptance into a good university.

Majid.

Here I just have my Canadian friends, just normal friends. I don't do any activities after school. Just stay at school and talk only in school.

~Majid

Leaving Home. At the time of this research interview, Majid was 15 years old and had come from Beirut, Lebanon to PEI, Canada the end of July, 2009. Majid had the highest level of English language proficiency of all participants; he said his level of English was 3.5 after his English language proficiency assessment at the EAL/FAL Reception Centre. Although Majid did not know what that number meant exactly, he responded: "Well actually I did not know what that meant, so for me it was an average grade. I prefer to read in English. I used to succeed in English but to fail in Arabic." After Majid talked about his assessment, he commented on how he felt about leaving home:

> I moved to Beirut when I was young; in year 2001 I started school; I was studying over there. I had a lot of friends over there, so I was satisfied with my living, and I was happy. I wasn't that much bored I always had something to do. I was sad about leaving my friends and my school because I was connected to my school. Even the church I used to go to, I was connected to the church.

Majid talked about his church and the social connections he made by being part of the youth group in Beirut. He shared this recognition photo (see Figure 22). This church involvement continued to be important to Majid here as he was part of a youth group on PEI as well.

Figure 22: Majid's Youth Group Recognition

PEI. Majid came to PEI with his younger brother, older brother and his parents. They lived with his uncle and his cousin in Charlottetown very close to the high school he attended. Majid said he spoke Arabic at home with them all of the time. Majid talked of special memories spending time with his family at home, one of which included Christmas where he and his family

spent a great deal of time decorating the Christmas tree (see Figure 23). He also made reference to his uncle's special Christmas log cake that was a traditional treat for him and his family (see Figure 24).

Figure 23: Majid's Christmas Tree Decorations

Figure 24: Majid's Uncle's Christmas Log Cake

Majid talked a great deal about preparing and sharing food with his family as a very important Lebanese tradition. He was very proud of the Lebanese salad he had made and had chosen this as one of his photographs to share and discuss (see Figure 25).

Figure 25: Majid's Lebanese Salad

School in PEI. Majid was in grade10 at an inner city high school. He was taking an EAL class, physical education, English 421, and science. He said he had taken the material in EAL and in science before but when I asked how he felt about taking the same material, he said he was happy because he was pleased with his marks but that he was also bored from taking the same material. He found the research aspect of English 421 the most challenging: "The most challenging is to write the research on the computer. The way I write because I am off on the spelling. And I just can't write English so good. I guess I am good I just don't know how to express my ideas." Majid noted that he was reading Among the Barons for his own interest and To Kill A Mockingbird and Mid Summer Night's Dream as school requirements. When asked about the latter two, he responded, "I don't like poetry that much. I understand it because the

teacher explained it to us in normal English. And To Kill a Mockingbird, I didn't really like the story that much. For me it was kind of boring."

Majid indicated he felt his reading interest and understanding would indicate that his reading [comprehension] is at a higher level than his listening and speaking. Although the higher level EAL course, EAL 701D, is a prerequisite for English 421, Majid was taking them both at the same time, which is not the typical pathway for a student learning English as an additional language.

School in Lebanon. Majid indicated that he could understand his teachers better in Lebanon because they spoke Arabic. He also said the teaching method was different, "I find the teachers [in Lebanon] care more about the students; sometimes we have fun in class and talk to the teachers." Other differences Majid noted were that in Lebanon he could not choose his courses. The teachers in Lebanon traveled to him, whereas here he had to move to each class-classes that he had chosen himself here on PEI.

Life in Charlottetown. When asked about his life after school, Majid said he usually studied:

> Sometimes I don't have much homework so I study. When I finish studying, it depends. Sometimes I sit on the computer. Sometimes I practice my violin. Sometimes on Tuesday or Thursday I go swimming. On Monday I go to youth at the church. Sometimes I get bored.

Friendships. Majid stated to me when he talked about his friendships that he "was not that good at friends, the number of friends." When I asked him to explain a little more about what he meant by this, he responded, "I mean the friendships aren't that strong. We aren't best

friends, they are just normal friends/to be best friends and trust your friends it will take a year or two to know your friend and trust your friend. I have just been here four or five months." I asked Majid again in the second interview to explain what he meant about normal friends and best friends and if he could describe the Canadian friends he has here now:

> Here I just have my Canadian friends, just normal friends. I don't do any activities after school. Just stay at school and talk only in school. Sometimes we talk on MSN and Face book but we never did any activities after school. I don't usually talk to them in Lebanon and tell them my stories.

Majid went on to explain that what he meant by "normal" friends were those that one would have at school and now outside of school. His definition of best friends consisted of those friends with whom one does activities after school where he would "talk about personal life and the life after school and families and other things. Best friends are like second brothers."

Majid attributed the differences in friendships to the length of time he had to get to know someone. "My friends in Lebanon; I used to know them for two or three years. I know them like my brothers, but here I am only here for six or seven or eight months and I don't know them that good". In discussing his experiences with friendships back home, Majid talked of his brother, Julien, and the close friendship they shared. Majid brought in a photograph (see Figure 26) of this Number One; Best Friend Trophy award, followed by Julien's note (see Figure 27), wishing him well and saying good-bye.

Figure 26: Majid's Best Friend Award

Figure 27: A Note from Julien

"Hello dear friend...miss you a lot *walla*...hope everything going good in Canada and hope to see you soon..."

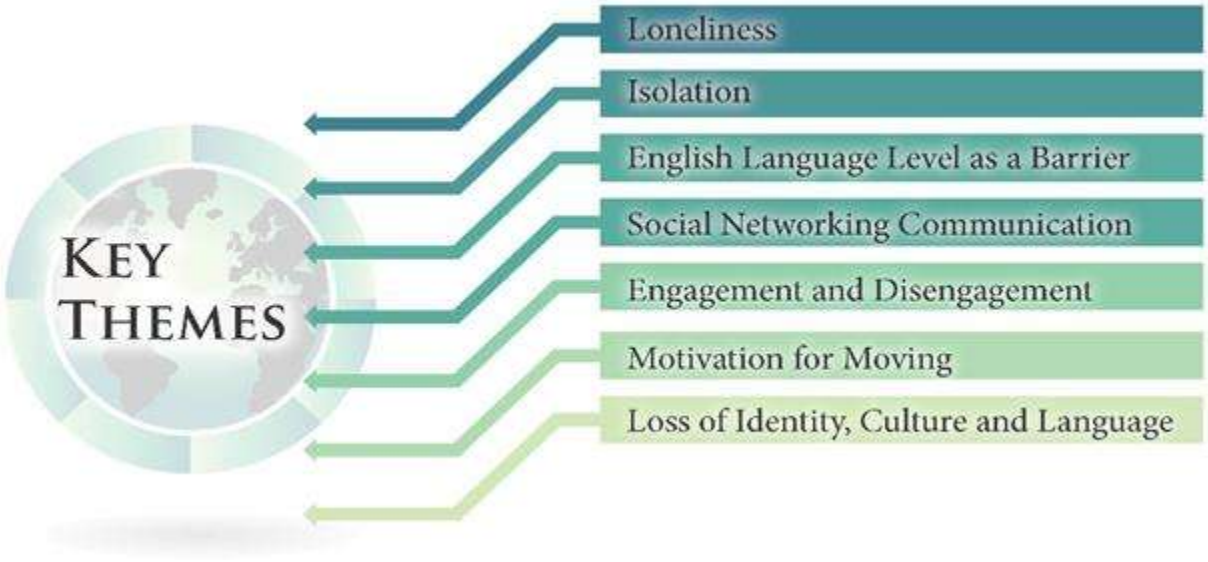
When Majid spoke of his lack of close "brotherly-like friendships," here on PEI, he noted that when he was finding it really frustrating and lonely at school, he had a teacher who reached out to him. This was his music teacher who encouraged him to pick up his love of playing the violin. Majid began going to the music area in the school, resumed playing the violin and eventually made some friends with whom he could connect through music. Majid shared this photo (see figure 28) describing it as his favorite pastime.

Figure 28: Majid's Favourite Pastime

Key Themes

The next section includes a summary of the common themes that emerged from the research conversations, creating participants' personal narratives and photographs. Findings from participants portraits' resulted in the key themes: loneliness, isolation, English language level as a barrier, social networking communication, engagement and disengagement, motivation for moving, and loss of identity, culture and language (see Figure 29).

Figure 29: Key Themes Identified from Research Conversations



Loneliness. All four participants missed family and friends back home. Three out of four of the participants had come to Canada with one parent only. Only one out of four participants, Majid, the participant from Beirut, had come with both of his parents. Pete and Cathy from Asia, who had both come to Canada with their mothers, noted that they had missed their fathers and were looking forward to seeing them when they either travelled home or their fathers came to PEI. Cathy did not seem to know when she would see her father again. Mary came with her aunt, uncle, cousins, and her brother. She said she really missed her parents in

Colombia. Mary's father was remarried; he had children from his second marriage. She showed me pictures of her parents and her step-siblings (not included due to ethical considerations) during the second research conversation and she said they had sent her here to have a better life as her mom's health made it difficult to care for her and her brother. They also felt Canada was a less violent place to grow up as opposed to Colombia. Mary was quite visibly emotional when talking about her mother.

Although Mary socialized the most (cheerleading; hanging out at the mall with friends) out of all four participants, she still seemed to experience loneliness for her home country, friends, and especially her parents. The youngest participant from Beijing, Pete, whose English was the lowest, experienced a great deal of loneliness. He said he did not have any friends. The other participants stated their friends were in their classes. They went home after school.

The participant, Cathy, who had been on PEI the longest, had a small group of friends with whom she socialized. Cathy said she never made friends outside of her EAL classes; they were mostly international friends, not Canadian friends. According to nearly all of the participants, one of the biggest challenges in making Canadian friends was their low English language proficiency level. Cathy, Peter and Majid all cited their English language level as a barrier to making Canadian friends, as they said it was challenging to carry on a conversation. It would break down quickly since they did not have the vocabulary to share their thoughts, even though most times they felt they understood what their peer was saying. These three participants had stronger receptive language than expressive. Mary, being at a higher proficiency level, cited her culture and diversity in terms of interests as being the reason for not having as close friendships as she would have preferred. One of Mary's photos showed a letter that Mary's friend from Colombia wrote to her when she left Winnipeg. Having a close friend from the same

culture and language was very rewarding for Mary. All four participants photographed something that revealed they were lonely for friends or family from home (i.e., as shown in comments, a letter, or a trophy from a friend).

> For many English language learners and their families, the period of adjustment and acculturation to a new land and new school system is painful. Even native-born children find a new school environment intimidating at first. Those who have come to their new school from other countries may also be coping with feelings of loneliness, homesickness and displacement (Coehlo, 2004, p. 17).

There seemed to be a sense of loss for all four participants- whether they lost family or friends. For the participants, there was a close connection between feeling lonely and being isolated from their peers here in Canada and at home.

Isolation. Perhaps the most powerful words that affected me as researcher were those of one of the male participants, Majid, who told me that he felt that he was like a statue in the classroom. Majid explained this by saying that people would look at him and talk around him but treated him like an object that could not really interact with them. Feeling like a statue would suggest that he felt isolated like an inanimate object without a voice and void of human emotions. Majid's cultural and linguistic identities were not recognized; they were blatantly ignored as the predominant PEI culture and English language took precedence.

All participants were isolated as their language and cultures were not the predominant ones in the classroom. The participants did not share their cultures and languages. The sense of being isolated and feeling invisible because one is not recognized was apparent through Majid's feelings of being treated like a statue. In addition to being isolated in school, three out of four of

the participants were isolated outside of the classroom as well. They spoke of going home after school and either doing homework or trying to connect with friends from back home. Social isolation greatly affected these participants. For many, the intervention of an adult (i.e., a parent or a teacher) to support them with this challenge came in the form of encouragement to join an extra-curricular activity, like playing a musical instrument, badminton or joining cheerleading. In all instances where they joined clubs or participated in extracurricular activities, students made some connections with their peers. However, it seemed as though it was extremely challenging for them to form deeper kinds of friendships like the ones they mourned from home.

Although I could not use the photographs of friends in this thesis for ethical reasons, all four participants did show me pictures of their friends here on PEI. They described how these friendships were different. Majid for example, talked about how his friends in Beirut were like his brothers. There was more of a sense of trust, camaraderie and commonality the participants had with their friends from their home countries.

In China, Pete noted that talking about his grades with his friends was something he enjoyed and had in common with them, whereas here on PEI, he felt the students were not as concerned with their marks as his friends back home. Academic achievement was Pete's main priority. Mary also spoke of her friends back home in Colombia who were able to relate to her more so than her peers here on PEI. Mary said that her friendships were different here in Canada than they were back in Columbia.

The participants' comments regarding friendships reminded me of one of my first EAL students who was from India. She told me that people on PEI and in her inner city school were very friendly but nobody wanted to be her friend. For me this meant that we, as Islanders, might

be friendly but we are not very welcoming. Missing deeper level friendships as well as one or more parents can compound feelings of loneliness and isolation. Such feelings can make it more challenging for newcomers to adjust to a new culture, country and language. Ironically, many immigrants will choose to come to PEI because it is Canada's smallest province and has a quieter way of life with fewer people, but sometimes these factors make it less welcoming and more of a closed society. Baldacchino (2006) also posed the question, "Can a close and cohesive society avoid being a closed society?" My former student's comment indicated, for her at the very least, PEI was very closed.

English language as a barrier. As noted under the theme of loneliness, the participants' level of English proficiency was a factor in their social integration. Being at a very low English language proficiency level, it was quite difficult for participants like Pete to communicate orally at school. Pete was also at a disadvantage in his course work as it was challenging to understand what the teachers were asking him to do and even more challenging to express to them what in fact he did understand. Lower-level English speaking youth can be very lonely due to their limited expressive oral language. With some encouragement to play badminton, Pete began to make some connections with his peers after school. With less pressure to have a full fledged conversation and just focus on the game, he felt less pressure to make sense of too many English words at once while he could just have fun. Pete commented that through badminton he began to make friends. Prior to this extra-curricular activity, Pete made several comments about missing his friends back home. He would talk to them on the computer as he didn't have any friends on PEI. Of all the participants, Pete seemed very isolated. He stated several times that his level of English (proficiency) was a big factor in his lack of friendships.

Although Majid's English language level was at an intermediate level, he still had some challenges making friends in school and understanding his coursework, especially in his grade 10 English class while reading To Kill a Mockingbird and Shakespeare. However, with cousins and family friends who spoke Arabic, Majid had social connections outside of school on which he positively commented during his interview. For Majid his English language proficiency was more of an academic barrier than a social one.

Cathy noted as well that her teachers told her she did not know some of her assignments which I understood to mean she didn't understand how to do them. Cathy also disclosed that she stopped responding in class because her teachers did not understand what she was saying. She would repeat something several times only to be told she was not understood. Coming across as somewhat shy and withdrawn during the interview, speaking out in class seemed challenging for her and even more because she was not understood. Attending an inner city school with several EAL learners, Cathy had several peers who spoke her first language, so English was more an academic barrier for her than a social one. Being in a rural school with fewer EAL students and nobody from the same culture and language in his class, Pete's English language proficiency level was a barrier for him, increasing his loneliness and isolation.

Being at a high intermediate English language proficiency level, Mary did not express this as being huge barrier for her socially or academically. With Spanish as her first language, Mary was at an advantage because of some word knowledge due to beneficial cognates[5] that helped her when trying to figure out English vocabulary. As well, her first language being

[5] While English may share very few cognates with a language like Chinese, 30-40% of all words in English have a related word in Spanish (Colorado, 2007),therefore, for Spanish-speaking EAL students, cognates are an obvious bridge to the English language.

Spanish may mean that she may adjust more easily both linguistically and socially due to less difference between English and Spanish than Chinese or Arabic and English.

Social networking and communication. All of the participants used their personal computers to communicate with friends and family back home. They accessed certain social networking sites like Face Book, Yahoo Messenger, or Skype. Some of the participants noted that the time changes posed challenges when trying to live chat with friends, but they felt these connections were ones they wanted to keep and seemed to need as the connections with "new friends" here were just not the same. While all of the participants talked about how they used their computers to chat with friends back home, two of the participants, Mary and Pete, actually took pictures of their computers as part of their second research conversation.

Mary had taken a picture of her laptop as she talked about using it to chat with her parents or friends back home in Colombia. Mary also took her laptop into the second research conversation where she showed me several pictures of her parents and close friends back home in Colombia. She knew I could not use the pictures in my actual study but yet she still felt strongly about their importance and felt she wanted to share them with me. Although her brother was with her and they lived with her aunt and uncle, she really missed her mother and father and the computer was a way for her to keep them closer by talking to them often. Socially, Mary seemed to be forming the most friendships with her peer group but yet she had a profound sense of home sickness.

Pete photographed his laptop on his desk where he did a lot of chatting with his friends back home. He noted that the time difference could sometimes pose a problem with this communication, especially after school when he was alone and wanted to chat with friends.

Using the computer to connect with friends would allow Pete to talk in his first language where he would have the vocabulary for a topic of interest to him. Majid and Cathy also used their computers for social networking and communication with their friends back home but also with some of their new friends here on PEI.

Engagement and disengagement. Acculturation and assimilation took longer for some participants than for others, depending on many factors, like being engaged socially and academically. Initially, all of the participants were socially disengaged like most new students. The female participants seemed to be more socially engaged with their peers. Conversely, the male participants were more socially disengaged, especially Pete who did not have social connections in his community like Majid did. Both of these males were marginalized in their classrooms as they did not interact with others nor did they have any social connections.

Academically, the participants were motivated to learn English and progress in all subject areas, but when they were not understood by their peers or their teachers, they were not truly engaged in their learning. With her high level of English language proficiency, Mary could easily ask questions for clarification and comprehension; Cathy had more success asking a peer who spoke the same language for clarification; whereas, Majid and Pete were not in such situations. Although they would appear to be engaged by their attendance, listening and taking notes, this was only surface engagement as much of what was being discussed, read, and explained was not understood.

Motivation for moving. Although there are commonalties among the participants' reasons or motivations for moving to Canada, such as their parents wanting them to have a better life or future, there are still some significant differences. For example, Majid's motivation for moving was largely due to the civil unrest and lack of safety in Beirut.

Similarly, Mary stated that Colombia was not safe; there was a lot of crime in her town of Beirara. Cathy was here with her mom only as was Pete. Both of these participants indicated that they had come to Canada to learn English and to attend a good post-secondary institution. At the time of this thesis, Cathy was attending the University of Prince Edward Island, and the last time I spoke to Pete (September, 2012) he was preparing to write his TOEFL for entrance to either the University of Toronto or McGill in Montreal.

Motivation for EAL students to move to PEI was similar to their reasons for moving to Canada-to have a better life and future. Choosing PEI over all the other provinces had to do with it being a small, welcoming safe place with a slower pace. Ironically, choosing PEI partially because it was supposedly a welcome and friendly place did not always prove true for these participants, especially when most indicated at one time or another they felt a huge sense of isolation and marginalization on the Island.

Loss of identity, culture and language. Having done research on the importance of additional language learners being able to maintain their first language, and learning and that there is a place and purpose for allowing students to speak their first language at school, it was frustrating and disappointing to see "English Only Zone" signs in some schools I had visited during my research. This reminded me of hearing Jim Cummins (2009) speak about EAL students losing their identities. Cummins (2009) talked about the message these English-only

signs communicate to students-their language and cultures are not accepted or recognized. In essence, the underlying message is: leave your culture and language at the door. Our identities are formed from what we learn at home and then in the outside world. Youth in their adolescent years greatly look to their peers for acceptance and reassurance that they are okay. Much of their identities at this age are often formed by how others perceive them. For at least one of the participants, there was a feeling of not being seen at all as he felt like a statue.

When participants, like Majid, talked about feeling like a statue, it was worse than his peers not asking about his culture and language; they seemed to be ignoring it. Although Majid had a strong sense of his culture and language at home with his immediate and extended family, this disconnect with his peers still proved to be a sense of loneliness for him that was the result of a loss of his identity, culture and language with his peers- peers that are crucial at this stage of adolescence.

Similar to Majid, Pete felt a sense of disconnect with his peers which affected his identity at school. Pete's disconnect was due to his challenge to orally express himself and communicate due to his language level. He would attribute the primary reason for his disconnect as not being interested in the same things as his peers.

Summary

As noted in the *Methods* section, key themes that emerged from the conversations conducted with each of the participants were identified. The key themes included loneliness, isolation, English language proficiency level as a barrier, social networking and communication, engagement and disengagement, motivation for moving, and loss of identity, culture and language. Similarities and differences among the responses were assessed and compared with

students' language levels, socio-economic status, educational and personal experiences and length of time in Canada. Findings also indicated that the lower the participant's English proficiency language level, the more challenging it was for him/her to integrate within PEI schools and society. Moreover, having a lower proficiency level often made learning challenging; understanding teachers and textbooks in English was not easy. Coming from fairly similar socioeconomic backgrounds, the participants didn't present significant differences when it came to finances and costs. Participants did notice that others from varying socio-economic backgrounds did not appreciate their education. All of the participants in this study appreciated the educational opportunities they had been given. Previous educational experiences varied as some participants attended private schools while others attended public schools; some participants were segregated (in Colombia) as well. The longer the students were in Canada, the more international friends they made, but whether they were here for six months or a year, there were still challenges integrating successfully into PEI schools and communities.

Chapter 5-Discussion of Findings

I am being ignored here so if I left it wouldn't make a difference since I am being ignored. I am not having a lot of fun here so leaving would be better. Since in Lebanon I will be with my friends and not ignored. ~Majid

Majid's initial quote in Chapter 1 occurred when he was left out of a group activity in his English class. The quote above reveals Majid's response when I asked him about how being like a statue made him feel. In his response, he mentioned the word "ignored" several times, and then he connected that feeling to leaving Canada and returning to Lebanon. For Majid, unlike Michelangelo, the statue metaphor was not working.

From Majid's perspective, he was being ignored because his peers were not interacting with him. He made reference to leaving Lebanon and being with his Lebanese friends who would not ignore him; and, he connected the ignoring to not having fun here on PEI. Perhaps the students in his group were not talking to him due to a language barrier; nonetheless, Majid's believed he was being ignored. He internalized their behavior. Even if the students lacked awareness of their ignoring, this is still a form of silencing and asserting their symbolic power (Bourdieu, 1977). Therefore, this quote provides a suitable lead into the concluding chapter, which includes what PEI schools and educators can do to help immigrant youth feel more included, and less ignored in their classrooms and schools.

This final chapter of my thesis also includes a return to the research questions to discuss the participants' successes and barriers to learning and living in PEI schools and communities. This last chapter also makes connections between my findings and the pertinent literature on additional language learning, motivation and investment, power relations, social cognitive

theory, self efficacy, identity, and sense of belonging. Limitations of this research are also discussed and the implications for further research are proposed. This chapter also suggests that responsibility for action be shared by multiple stakeholders including the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, the English Language and Western School Boards, the Faculty of Education (UPEI), the University of Prince Edward Island, Holland College, the Department of Innovation and Advanced Learning, the Canadian Immigration Centre, Provincial Nominee Program, and the PEI Association for Newcomers. Finally and most importantly, this chapter concludes with recommendations for supporting the education and integration of immigrant youth in PEI high schools and their respective communities.

Summary of Key Findings: A Return to the Research Questions

The aim of this study was to give four EAL students time and a place to share their perspectives on how their experiences in PEI schools and communities have shaped who they are and how they see themselves. The participants completed two research conversations which revealed that there were many successes but also several barriers while living and learning on PEI. Findings from both research conversations created narratives in words and portraits, from which eight key themes emerged: loneliness, isolation, English language as a barrier, social networking communication, engagement, disengagement, motivation for moving, and loss of culture and language. Interestingly, but also unfortunately many of these key themes have presented themselves before in previous studies (Arsenault, 2008; Baldacchino, 2006; Buch 2007; Chuang, 2011; Duff, 2002; Norton, 1993, 2000; MacNevin, 2011; Stewart, 2007) and the Fresh Voices YAT, 2013).

I return to the two research questions that guided the research conversations:

1. What factors do EAL students attribute to their successes in the PEI school system and community?

2. What barriers do EAL students say inhibit their successes in the PEI school system and community?

Factors leading to success. Although the students did identify more challenges than successes, they did share what factors made their experiences learning and living on PEI more enriching and enjoyable. The participants attributed their success in PEI schools and communities to: family, opportunity, environment, engagement (extra-curricular activities), independence, and social media/networking, and time.

Family. Cathy, Pete and Majid took photographs of cooking they did with mom or dad. They identified the culinary dishes as "traditional" and talked about choosing to photograph the food because they enjoyed cooking with a parent. Not only was this a way to maintain cultural identity, it was also a way to keep connected to family and to "home." As well, Cathy and Pete, who were here with mom only, spoke of the closeness they had with their mothers when cooking with them. Mary lived with her aunt and uncle whom she described as her "second family" and she chatted online almost daily with her parents in Columbia. All of the participants noted the importance of family connections here on PEI as they were factors in their adjustment on PEI.

Acknowledging the importance of family connections has been revealed by immigrant youth in other research (Fresh Voices YAT, 2013). Nurturing and supporting roles of family were referenced a great deal in the interviews in Stewart's (2007) study; and unfortunately, however, "separation of the family members and breakdown were two of the most prevalent

issues in Stewart's work" (2011, p.153). Family separation was one of the biggest challenges faced by some immigrant youth, especially refugees (MacNevin, 2011, Stewart, 2011; Fresh Voices YAT, 2013).

Opportunity. All of the participants left their home countries to immigrate to PEI for different reasons, but each came with great excitement and anticipation despite their diverse educational experiences. All of the participants, no matter what their circumstances were for moving to PEI, identified the opportunity they were given to come, mostly acknowledging that their parents wanted a better future for them. Starting school in Canada was scary but also very exciting. For all participants, it was the beginning of a new educational experience that would hopefully lead to a successful job and future.

Since this factor, "opportunity," is very much connected to students' motivation for moving to Canada and PEI, and to learn English, we return to Gardner (1985) and Dornyei's (2009) theories of motivation. In addition to appreciating the opportunity to live in Canada and on PEI, students identified learning English as a motivator for them. Motivations for moving to Canada were instrumental in the sense that Cathy, Pete, Mary and Majid generally identified functional reasons for moving to Canada such as getting into a good Canadian university, and eventually getting a good job for a better future. Motivation to move to PEI for was instrumental from a family point of view for Mary and Majid in that they already had extended family here. For all of the participants, their families' motivation in choosing PEI as a settlement destination included its quiet, small and peaceful nature. These findings resemble those from Baldacchino (2006) who referred to the "attractiveness" of living on PEI, while other instrumental factors included being close to family, promise or prospects for employment of business, affordable

housing or farm land, sedate temperament, rural and urban balance, lure of ocean and beaches, and relatively mild winters.

Environment. The environmental nature of Canada and PEI was also a motivating factor for moving. Most of the participants' positive comments about PEI involved its demography, geography and population. Each participant commented on how peaceful, safe, quiet and beautiful Prince Edward Island is. All four participants photographed some aspect of PEI landscape or landmark. Coming from heavily populated cities like Shanghai and Beirut, PEI was less noisy, populated and polluted for Pete and Majid. Coming from a city like Beirara, Colombia, which had a lot of crime, to a safer place like PEI, was a refreshing relief for Mary. A lower crime rate was also cited in Baldacchino's (2006) survey results. In terms of their communities, Mary spoke enthusiastically about St. Catherine's; Pete about Cornwall; and, Cathy and Majid about Charlottetown, referring to them as nice, smaller places, with few people.

Engagement (extra-curricular activities). In terms of successes at school, Pete, Mary and Majid were involved in extra-curricular activities (i.e., badminton, cheerleading and violin) that assisted in their engagement, socialization, and language learning. As well, Majid was involved with his church youth group and his community centre for swimming. All four participants shared photographs of an object or landmark associated with an extracurricular activity (violin, church, youth group running award, artwork). Arsenault's (2008) study also discovered that his PEI immigrant youth found it easier to make new friends through athletic activities. As well immigrant youth from British Columbia also mentioned "extracurricular and after school activities which helped them build relationships, friendships and a sense of belonging" (Fresh Voices YAT, 2013, p. 8).

Participants engaging in their environment through such activities revealed their ability to shape their environment rather than passively react to it (Bandura, 1999). Therefore, the community played a crucial role in promoting feelings of empowerment and engagement when the students were asked about their education and living experiences in Canada and on PEI. Similar findings (Arsenault, 2008; Chuang, 2011; MacNevin 2011; Stewart, 2007) revealed the importance of community engagement. Such factors like engagement, identity, and self efficacy (Bandura, 1999; Cummins 2001, 2007; Norton, 2000) contribute to the success of a language learner in learning the target language.

Independence. Coming from rigid, sometimes segregated and very competitive educational systems, courses and academic pathways were often chosen for the students. Cathy, Mary and Majid enjoyed selecting their courses in Canada because this option provided them a sense of new found independence and ownership. Most of the students felt they liked the variety of courses, the availability of extracurricular activities, and they enjoyed moving from class to class to encounter new teachers and students, which meant meeting lots of new people. Previous education often extended into the evening for Cathy and Pete, so their new found sense of independence in Canada also meant they had time after school to do as they liked. This independence created a sense of ownership and empowerment where students felt more a part of their own educational plans.

Social media/networking. All four participants commented on their online communication with family and friends, both back in their home countries and here on PEI. As well, two participants photographed their desk or laptops because these items allowed for "real-time" communication with family and friends through social media sites like Face Book or through live chat or Skype. One participant, Mary, whose parents were still in Colombia, relied

heavily on social media to communicate daily with her mother. As well, participants used these sites to chat with international friends here on PEI.

Time. Time was identified as a factor contributing to participants' adjustment and assimilation successes in that the longer students were here, the more they adapted, had a sense of engagement, connection and belonging. One participant, Mary, had lived in Winnipeg before coming to live on PEI, while another, Cathy, had visited Vancouver (as a possible settlement destination) before moving to PEI. At the end of their research conversations, when participants were asked about the advice they would give someone who was moving here, they all said that it takes time to make friends and get used to the culture and its traditions. As discussed further at the end of this chapter, Majid, attributed his adjustment to the culture of PEI to the amount of time he had been in Canada-the longer he was here, the more he knew the culture.

Barriers inhibiting success. This next section is based on the second research question which discusses the barriers EAL students' identified as inhibiting their success in the PEI school system and in their communities. These barriers are explored in order of frequency in students' responses; therefore, presenting the most challenges for them in PEI schools and communities: English language level; lack of close friendships; loneliness; exclusion, isolation, and marginalization; and, cultural and adaptation and adjustment.

English language level. When I asked participants what the biggest barrier was to their learning, they all stated it was their English language level. Students struggled with knowing the meanings of enough English words to be able to give a lengthy, comprehensive response to their teachers; moreover, they could not always understand their textbooks. Not being able to understand nor communicate effectively with teachers led to isolation and loneliness for the

participants as they were often excluded from lessons and activities in the classroom. If the students did have enough social language to participate in classroom conversations, they thought they could succeed in their coursework. Participants' encountered two levels of communication challenges: basic communication of social language, and academic cognitive language (Cummins, 1979; Stewart, 2011).

Despite their varying levels of expressive language, Cathy, Mary and Majid spoke well and clearly in the research conversations, although, they often apologized and said they felt their speaking was very poor. Participants cited their English proficiency as a challenge to make friends because the conversation broke down when they did not know the vocabulary to continue. In addition, participants, especially Pete and Cathy, attributed their lack of socialization to their low English language levels. Cathy, Mary and Majid noted that their socialization improved as their English improved. Pete and Cathy stated their English language levels to be huge barriers in the community as well. They attended community centers and activities with international friends who spoke the same language. English language level has been identified by several others (Arsenault, 2008; Chuang, 2011; MacNevin, 2011; Stewart, 2007*)* as a common barrier for newcomer youth to carry on conversations to make friends and to understand their teachers and textbooks. Not being able to carry on a conversation with their classmates was a barrier that participants believed affected their ability to make close friends like those they mourned from Beirut, Bereira, Taipei and Shanghai.

Lack of close friendships. I heard repeatedly from the participants that they did not have the kind of friendships here on PEI like the meaningful friendships they had back home. Majid referred to his friends in Beirut as his brothers. He said the friendships here on PEI were not the same; he used the word "trust" several times with regard to his friends in Beirut. Mary noted her

friends on PEI were not the same as her friends in Colombia. Her friends in Colombia were much more social; they liked to attend parties and dance, whereas here, people were friendly but they didn't invite her anywhere. Pete said that he had no friends on PEI. Pete did not have the English vocabulary to carry on a longer conversation. He also noted he could not relate with many of his classmates because their grades were not as high a priority for them as they were for Pete.

All of the participants, except Mary, went home alone after school and did not socialize. As well in their second research conversations, every participant photographed either a letter, card, or their friends to discuss the importance of those friendships back home. When the participants spoke of their lack of close friendships, they looked sad and somewhat ashamed to tell me they did not have close friends on PEI. Interestingly, all participants implied that it was their fault they did not have close friendships since their English "wasn't good" and they were not here [on PEI] long enough. They stated more than once that Island youth were friendly but did not seem to want to be their friend. These experiences harken back to Stewart (2007), who noted that students who were not part of a *nanosystem*[6] reported that they did not have friends and all of them made reference to feeling alone. It is noteworthy that the participants were in their adolescent years at the time of this study, a time when friendships are crucial to them. If they are feeling a loss of close friendships in addition to missing family back home, one certainly wonders how this level of loneliness affect their overall adjustment and well-being.

[6] The nanosystem is a close, interpersonal relationship or network that is integral to connecting the individual to the mircosystem. The nanosystem is constructed by a significant person from the student's inner most microsytem. It could be a parent, a teacher, a coach, or a best friend.

Loneliness. Loneliness resulted because students were missing their families and friends back home. This is often a typical result of the newcomers' adjustment period, as Coelho (2004, p.7) stated: "Those who have come to their new school from other countries may also be coping with feelings of loneliness, homesickness, and displacement." Only one out of four of the participants, Majid, was in PEI with both parents. Loneliness was often caused by missing one or both parents as well as the home country, its traditions and customs. Loneliness resulting from loss of family or close friends was also identified by refugee students as a major barrier to adjusting to life in Canada in other studies (Chuang, 2011; MacNevin, 2011; Stewart, 2007).

Exclusion, isolation and marginalization. Three out of four of the participants in this study stated that at some point since their arrival on PEI, they had felt excluded and isolated. Cathy noted her friends were in her EAL classes, and she didn't talk to or work with students in her other classes unless they were her international friends who spoke her language; Pete, being at a very low English proficiency level, said he didn't have the vocabulary to converse with others; Majid cited he felt like a statue because he was there working in a group, but yet, he was ignored. In their descriptions, they felt left out of class discussion and group work. For the most part, they blamed themselves and their English language level for these barriers. While participants identified having some friendships in their EAL classes, they also felt marginalized in these classes. Like Arsenault's (2008) study, youth identified feeling excluded from the "mainstream" or "Canadian-born" friends. Three out of four of the participants reported that their friendships were with "international friends" or with friends in their classes. Students in other studies cited peer exclusion and lack of Canadian friendships under loneliness as well (Arsenault, 2008; Fresh Voices YAT, 2013). In some studies (Freeman & Freeman, 2009; Gunderson 2000; MacNevin, 2011, Stewart, 2011) refugee students in particular, felt

marginalized due to language, racism and discrimination. The participants in this study did not explicitly describe feeling marginalized due to racism, but they did describe feeling ignored, excluded and isolated.

Cultural adaptation and adjustment. Another reason they cited for their lack of friendships on PEI was cultural differences that made relating to peers difficult. The students could not always relate to their classmates who seemed indifferent to their grades. The participants in this study, especially from Asia, placed a very high priority on their academics. For them, it was hard to adjust to such nonchalant attitudes about education and achievement. As well, although many of the participants in this study as well as those in Baldacchino's (2006) identified the slow pace of life and quietness as a draw to PEI, for some it was also a factor that played into their adjustment since they said it was hard to adapt to somewhere so quiet and slow and less populated. Taking pictures of their home cooking also brought on discussions about adapting to Canadian food. All participants cited the food as something from home that they missed the most. Initially, not knowing how, participants found it challenging not to have access to food stores with their traditional type foods. Immigrant youth in British Columbia's Fresh Voices YAT (2013) also cited the challenge of adapting to their communities when they did not know anybody, especially someone from their home country who spoke the same language and who had gone through the immigration process themselves.

Disengagement. Although participants from St. Catherine's and Cornwall were positive about these communities because they were quiet, peaceful and less noisy with fewer people, the fact that they were 15-20 minutes outside of the city of Charlottetown was also a barrier for the students if they wanted to meet up with friends to hang out or go to a movie. This seemed to be more an issue for students who had more social connections with their peers outside of school.

For all of the participants, there seemed to be a sense of isolation in their communities, just as there was at school. They were excluded in that neighbors did not approach them to come for dinner. This disengagement, exclusion and isolation also appear to have affected their sense of identity and loss of culture as they never reported being invited to share these parts of themselves with people in their communities. In the end, moving to a smaller place like PEI or a smaller community like St. Catherine's proved to be more isolating and less welcoming for these participants. Again, community as environment played a role in socialization and interaction affecting integration (Bandura, 1977).

Limitations of the Study

Due to the fact this study consisted of only four participants, it is challenging to generalize the key themes to a larger EAL population. Also, as it so happens with a random sampling procedure, researchers receive who they receive. However, choosing from the EAL high school population was purposeful in itself. Moreover, the fact that there were two males and two females, and two were from an urban school and two from a rural school helps me to argue that the sample is somewhat reflective of the EAL population in PEI. Ideally I would not have included two students from Asia; however, it is true that more than 50% of the EAL population in PEI is from China. So the small purposely selected sample size permitted a feasible qualitative method which allowed in depth inquiry and understanding of a complex phenomenon. In this case the phenomenon was the experiences of four high school EAL students' in PEI schools and communities, explored through the research conversations. Admittedly, the questions seemed somewhat unbalanced in that there were more relating to school experiences than community. As the novice researcher, I struggled at times with probing further to push participants to talk. For example, at first, when they responded, "I don't know,"

or a simple, "No," I struggled to know where to go with this. I found the participants disclosed more in the second set of interviews, which was likely due to the participants' comfort level but I was also better at probing and rephrasing questions to get at more details. Moreover, the length of the study limited the depth of response; a more longitudinal study would lend itself to following participants over a longer period time which would, in turn, allow me to ask better detail-response type questions as well as to highlight the changes over greater time in the participants' lives.

Finally, wearing several hats as researcher, teacher and the EAL Teacher Support Specialist made it challenging to maintain my focus as researcher. I had to be cautious of making generalizations with my participants and the previous EAL students I had taught. I also had to make sure my final recommendations were reflective of the data, and not from what I knew from my job.

Implications for Future Research

This study could be the impetus for a much larger study, with a bigger sample size, which would allow comparisons and contrasts across cultures and PEI communities. This might include a longitudinal study of all secondary EAL learners on PEI from the time they enter high school until the time they leave, and after graduation, to track where they have gone and how their experiences compare to those on PEI which have proven to be beneficial from other studies which have also been done over a longer period of time (e.g., Pierce, 1993). Researching more EAL students from a variety of educational backgrounds (including refugee learners with significant gaps in their education) and cultures would be beneficial in terms of getting more data and tracking a variety of types of secondary EAL learners on PEI to contrast and compare their

experiences. Furthermore, a larger study could be extended to Atlantic Canada and eventually all of Canada to compare experiences across provinces. The data from a study like this could also provide provincial retention rates, which affect the bigger picture piece of immigration, and more importantly retention rates in Canada.

Future research might examine how the key themes from this and other studies directly affect EAL student performance and achievement. For example, do students who experience less isolation, loneliness, low self efficacy and engagement face more challenges with regard to their academic successes? As well, a closer exploration of what is happening for EAL secondary students that makes them feel they have more successes than challenges, might help us highlight these practices and ideas when providing support for teachers in their professional development when it comes to teaching EAL learners in their classrooms. Lastly, future research could include opportunities for immigrant youth to dialogue about their recommendations for schools and education might have the potential to reach higher levels, like policy makers, which might lead to more change, empowerment and inclusion.

Recommendations

Addressing the challenges in schools and communities. In order for immigrant youth to experience more success in PEI, it is crucial that there be more professional development and learning for administration, teachers and all school staff to make classrooms and schools more welcoming and inclusive. The following two broad recommendations: Ongoing Professional Development for Teachers and Schools; and, Creating Welcoming and Inclusive Communities are broken down as further suggestions to address the specific challenges the participants' identified.

***Ongoing professional development for teachers and schools*.** With the current EAL student population on PEI at over 900 students (EAL/FAL Reception Centre Database, 2013) and increasing each year (just over 300 EAL students in 2007-2008, EAL Reception Centre Database, 2013), chances are that many teachers in both urban and rural schools, will eventually experience having an EAL learner in their classrooms. As participants had identified their English language level as a barrier, providing professional development (PD) to classroom teachers on effective instructional strategies (drawn from the research and pedagogical EAL literature) would be of great benefit to address some of the challenges the participants identified (i.e., low English vocabulary, low comprehension of lectures and textbooks). In addition, the PD ideas suggested here are of benefit to all learners, including EAL learners in PEI classrooms.

Additional training in EAL. "I am not an EAL teacher" is a common phrase I sometimes hear, in my role as EAL Teacher Support Specialist, from k-12 teachers who have EAL learners in their classrooms. Teachers feel they have not received adequate support and training to work with EAL learners in their classroom, especially learners from refugee backgrounds (MacNevin, 2007; Stewart, 2011). Knowing the EAL students in one's classroom involves knowing what it means to acquire a new language—an unconscious process, whereas learning a second language is a conscious one (Krashen, 1982). Understanding the developmental stages of additional language acquisition helps teachers ensure that their lessons complement the appropriate stage of a student's English learning (Haynes & Zacarian, 2010). For students like Pete, who felt he lacked enough English vocabulary to participate in a lesson, perhaps this additional training could address how a teacher might work with a student like Pete, to make content more comprehensible.

Furthermore, additional training in EAL would dispel the myth that ignoring the first language is beneficial. Perhaps then, one might see less "English Only Zone" signs in certain schools. Although it can be challenging to provide bilingual education to all EAL learners, it is possible for teachers to implement bilingual instructional strategies (Cummins, 2011). Participants in this study said they did not use their first languages at school with the exception of chatting informally with friends from the same culture. The connection between bringing an EAL student's first language into the classroom and affirming his or her identity is supported by strong research evidence (Cummins, 2007). Moreover, since participants reported that their languages were not used in the classroom assignments and activities, there is a possibility of less investment in language learning (Norton, 2000). Through useful professional development, teachers would come to learn and understand the role of the first language in learning another language since there are several instructional strategies, like using identity texts[7] (Cummins & Early, 2011; Early & Gunderson, 1993) that have been proven successful. Such instructional strategies would also promote the affirmation of students' identities and encourage them to become more invested as they see themselves represented in their classrooms. One way, in particular to do this, would be in the use of identity texts and technology, especially since all of the participants used technology to communicate. Moreover, both Cathy and Mary photographed their artwork, which could be the beginning of an identity text for them.

Identity texts and technology. Identity texts are products of students' creative work or performances carried out within the pedagogical space orchestrated by the classroom teacher…when students share identity texts with multiple audiences (peers, teachers, parents,

[7] Identity texts are written, spoken, signed, visual, musical, dramatic, or combination s in multimodal form in which students create with an investment in their identities (Cummins & Early, 2011).

grand-parents, sister classes, the media, etc.) that are likely to receive positive feedback and affirmation of self in interaction with these audiences (Cummins & Early, 2011, p. 3). Creating identity texts are very empowering for students as they are share their identities. Although the participants in this study did not share any creations of these texts, one of them did highlight what it meant to him when one of his teachers made an attempt to learn about his culture, while two other students created artwork they photographed that could have been expanded into an identity text. Taking the identity text one step further and creating dual language texts could challenge coercive power relations in classrooms as students and teachers work collaboratively to negotiate identities in a way that power is being emitted from both (Cummins & Early, 2011) .

From the discussions of the photographs of their computers, students identified the use of technology to communicate with family and friends through social media sites. Therefore, the use of technology, as a learning and communicative tool, could be considered and implemented more in classrooms and communities.

Instructional choices. All four participants found their lectures, assignments, and textbooks challenging to understand. In addition, there were strong messages not to use their first language in the classroom. When asked about what teachers or classmates could do to help them adjust, participants noted that they could be asked about their language and culture. They did not see themselves reflected as participants in their classroom experiences. "Educators have considerable power to affect student identity construction in positive (and unfortunately negative) ways" (Cummins & Early, 2011, p. xvi). In turn, this power also involves teachers using instruction that explicitly challenges coercive power relations in the wider society, which will also be effective in promoting marginalized students' academic achievement (Cummins, 2011).

Professional development in instructional methods to help EAL students understand course material would be beneficial. When Cathy, Pete and Majid said their textbooks and lectures were very hard to understand, they felt their achievement of higher grades was at stake. "Teachers instructional choices within the classroom play a huge role in determining the extent to which students will emerge from an identity cocoon defined by their assumed limitations (e.g. the EAL student) to an interpersonal space-defined by their talents and accomplishments, both linguistic and intellectual" (Cummins & Early, 2011, p. xvi). Instructional choices that would help these and all EAL students should include: comprehensible input and output, collaborative learning, teaching language through content, explicit teaching of vocabulary, as well as other techniques and tools for students to feel more engaged in their learning because they understand their teachers and the material.

Comprehensible output and input. As many of the participants indicated, they did not have friends in school, and in particular, Majid has said he felt like a statue in his class. In these instances it would seem that little output with their peers had taken place as there was little interaction in group activities. Therefore, more opportunities for output are needed (Swain, 1985) for EAL learners to interact frequently with English first–language speakers. Participants also indicated that interaction with their teachers was limited as well. When her teacher tried to help her with a lecture for example, Cathy was embarrassed by repeating herself several times and the teacher saying in front of her peers, "I cannot understand you." Cathy did not understand her teacher nor did her teacher understand her.

Krashen (1989) states that people acquire language in only one way, by understanding messages-that is through comprehensible input. "Students are taught curriculum without the use of strategies that help them understand the message the teachers are sending. Lectures and drills

do not provide enough understandable messages" (Freeman & Freeman, 2009, p.9). If we know that learning through lecture style is not as effective as using visuals and realia for EAL learners then there should be further professional development for teachers in this area. Educators need to provide learning environments that create opportunities for newcomers to participate and build on their prior knowledge.

Collaborative learning. As Majid felt "ignored" in a group, and neither Cathy nor Pete worked in a group in class, offering PD to teachers on collaborative learning would therefore be beneficial. Teachers have opportunities in their classrooms to create a community of collaborative learners where EAL students may feel more included and as a result less excluded, lonely and isolated. Collaborative work is a key element in additional language instruction (Freeman & Freeman, 2009). Professional development which would identify and model effective collaborative learning strategies would assist teachers in providing more opportunities for peer learning and as a bonus also possibly enhance peer relationships and friendships. It is important not to assume, however, that EAL learners have worked in groups before and are comfortable with this process. Perhaps Majid, Pete and Cathy did not know where to begin to try to interact with their peers. They have to be taught the process and shown what to do. Assigning roles with specific responsibilities to group members works well. As well, the teacher needs to possess an awareness of possible cultural or intercultural conflicts at play in groups. With Cathy being from Taiwan and Pete from Shanghai, there could have been intercultural conflict as some students, like Mary who attended an all-girls private school, may have never worked in a group with the opposite sex. Lastly, some students may have never worked with an EAL student before so they may need to have some guidance as to how to work with someone from another culture who speaks another language.

Teaching language through content. Even Mary and Majid, whose oral language was quite strong found the lectures, course material and textbooks very challenging. Much of this course material was described in the research conversation as the "words" or "vocabulary." This vocabulary in various high school courses, noted in this study, falls under the category of academic language. Cummins (1981) distinguishes between social language and academic language in what he calls, basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP). Teachers need to understand that academic challenges are important to students' growth, but contextual support must also be present in the activities if students are to succeed academically (Cummins, 1996). Professional development for teachers can help dispel the myth that students need to learn English before they learn content. People learn language (how to speak, read, and write it), through content, and learn about language (phonics, grammar, spelling) as they develop their skills as literate beings. Very few students, EAL or otherwise, come to school with the language necessary to perform fully as educated people, to engage in academic discussions and read and understand the textbooks used in their classes. Teachers must help students develop the academic language they need to be successful in school. Moreover, teaching vocabulary explicitly assists students in gaining word knowledge and additional strategies to understand meaning.

Cultural diversity and sensitivity training. It was very evident for Pete, who had very little English vocabulary, what it meant to him when his teacher brought in items "Made in China" to lead into a discussion with him about his culture. When Majid was feeling so disengaged with his classmates, he reflected on feeling more "involved" when his music teacher helped him reconnect with his love of playing violin. Being from the same culture, Majid's music teacher was sensitive to his adjustment and could very much relate to his diversity. This

was a very positive experience for Majid, unlike the negative message he received from another teacher who asked him to repeat himself several times and then said, "Nevermind."

Knowing how to connect with an EAL student from another culture with another language is not something teachers usually learn in their education programs. Professional development, even in the form of teachers sharing their experiences working with EAL students, could go a long way in promoting diversity, sensitivity and inclusion.

Creating welcoming and inclusive communities.

It takes a village to raise a child. ~African Proverb

It is often noted that human relationships are at the heart of effective schooling. In order for schools and communities to support newcomers by welcoming and including them, the following recommendations are suggested: Sharing cultures and creating community connections.

Sharing cultures. All of the participants in this study noted that they spoke their first language, Spanish, Mandarin or Arabic, at home with their families. Students' stated that their motivation for doing so was keeping their language and culture. They were very proud of who they were and where they came from. Pete indicated how much he appreciated one teacher talking to him about China. Although Majid, said it made him sad to talk about home sometimes, he did enjoy talking with a teacher who also was from Lebanon. When asked what would help them be more successful here on PEI, participants said it would help if people asked about their cultures. It was important to them that Islanders ask about their home countries and languages. In addition, Cathy and Pete shared that they worried about their mothers because they

were alone a great deal and did not have the friendships here that they had back home in China. As lonely as they felt by times at school, Pete and Cathy worried about their moms at home. Providing ways for immigrant youth and their families to share their cultures in the community would address feelings of exclusion and isolation.

***Creating community connections*.** To counterbalance feelings of loneliness and isolation, developing strong connections with people from one's own community is necessary. For Majid, his church youth group was a community connection for him where he could socialize with his peers, albeit most from his own culture. Despite some of the challenges related to community groups, for the most part, participants in this study indicated that that they liked living in their respective communities of St. Catherine's, Cornwall and Charlottetown.

In order for EAL youth to experience more success in PEI communities and organizations, including church youth groups, community centers, sport and recreation facilities, 4- H groups, Young Entrepreneurs, Kiwanis Educated Youth (KEY) Club, peer education and mentoring programs must all recognize and act on the important role they can or do play in making PEI communities more welcoming and accepting of all youth and assisting in their integration into these communities.

Creating community connections where people of different cultural backgrounds can mix is important for EAL immigrant youth and their families to be in welcoming, inclusive environments where people can learn about each other and extend their "friendliness" to actually inviting a new neighbour over for dinner.

Concluding reflections.

Provincial collaboration and responsibility. All stakeholders working in the EAL realm must continue to verse themselves in current research relating to learning English as an additional language. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DOEECD) alone cannot take on all of the financial, economic, educational, social, emotional challenges in making EAL students' experiences in PEI schools and communities more successful. The DOEECD can lead ongoing research in collaboration with school boards and other stakeholders. Taking the lead on research in the area of EAL, the DOEECD can push other government sectors (i.e., Innovation and Advanced Learning, Immigration, Health, etc.) to do research as well. Moreover, UPEI is another important stakeholder that is poised to play a crucial role in professional development for teachers, tackling ongoing issues in education, and taking a lead in the area of research.

Given its size, PEI has an opportunity to lead collaboration among stakeholders that is not often seen in the rest of the country. PEI could be a leader in how to use a system-wide approach to improve the experiences of EAL youth on PEI, and potentially keep them here for their post-secondary education and beyond, furthering our own Island economy. For the success of all EAL youth in PEI schools and communities, city or rural, stakeholders in immigration must take responsibility for welcoming and supporting EAL youth and their families in the short and long term which will be beneficial to PEI and Canada.

Hopefully, with the collaboration and responsibility of stakeholders in EAL, ongoing research in this area, and the implementation of the recommendations identified, EAL youth, like Cathy, Pete, Mary, and Majid, will have more positive stories about PEI schools and

communities. Perhaps then, immigrant youth, like Majid, will feel less ignored like a statue, though other means than simply being here longer:

> *Yeah, the longer I am here, I will get used to this country and the traditions and everything. The longer I am here, the better. You get used to it more and more and more. The longer you are here you can meet new people and make new friends. You won't feel strange anymore because you know the culture.*
>
> *~Majid*

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APPENDIX A

Information letter for the Eastern School District

Kevin Macleod
Career Education Consultant
Eastern School District
234 Shakespeare Drive
Stratford, PE C1B 2V8

Dear Mr. Macleod,

I am writing to seek approval to conduct a research study with English as Additional Language (EAL) secondary students in your school board. I am seeking four volunteer participants at the secondary level, from grades 10-12 at Colonel Gray and Bluefield high schools. My study, English as an Additional Language (EAL) Students' Lived Experiences in Prince Edward Island Schools and Communities, has been approved by the University of Prince Edward Island's Research Ethics Board (REB).

I am interested in hearing secondary EAL students' voices. I would like to better understand their experiences in Prince Edward Island schools and communities. I would like to have a conversation with four EAL students about their lived experiences, so I can learn more about their challenges and successes in Prince Edward Island schools and communities.

Please find attached a copy of the ethics approval certificate issued by the University of Prince Edward Island Research Ethics Board (REB). I am also enclosing a copy of the ethics application submitted to this committee, as well as the information and consent forms that would be used for this study.

I hope that you will agree this is a worthwhile study; it has been funded by the Joint Education Research Group, which you know to be a worthwhile group which recognizes educational research of theoretical and practical value to educators and all stake-holders involved with immigration and its impact on Prince Edward Island.

I am hopeful that you will agree that the methodology I propose to employ will provide a valuable learning experience for all involved.

If you would like to receive more information about the study, or if you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at vjwhitlock@edu.pe.ca; phone: 902-620-3747, or my thesis supervisor, Dr. Miles Turnbull at mturnbull@upei.ca; phone: 902-566-0341. You could also contact the University of Prince Edward Island Research Ethics Board at 902-620-3747, or by email at lmacphee@upei.ca, should you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of this study. I look forward to hearing from you soon. Thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Vicki J. Whitlock

Master of Education Candidate
University of Prince Edward Island

APPENDIX B

Information letter for principals

[Date]

[Principal's Name]

[Name and Address of School]

Dear [Principal's Name]:

I am conducting a study on the lived experiences of secondary English as Additional Language (EAL) students in various Prince Edward Island high schools. My study, English as an Additional Language (EAL) Students' Lived Experiences in Prince Edward Island Schools and Communities, has been approved by the University of Prince Edward Island's Research Ethics Board (REB).

I am interested in hearing secondary EAL students' voices. I would like to better understand their experiences on Prince Edward Island, both at secondary school and in their communities. I would like to have a conversation with them about their experiences so I can learn more about their challenges and successes here on Prince Edward Island.

I am writing to request permission to invite two EAL students from your school to participate in this study. I would like to contact a teacher working with these students to assist in providing information to students.

This study will involve the two research conversations (interviews):

1. An initial 60 minute conversation, starting with 45 minutes with me during school hours or a mutually convenient time. The purpose of this conversation will be to explore the

students' lived experiences in Prince Edward Island schools and communities. This interview is a research conversation where I will ask students a series of questions on the barriers inhibiting their progress in school and in the community as well as the factors that have contributed to their successes. The last 15 minutes of the interview will be to explain a task to students where they will be asked to describe their lived experiences by taking photos of objects or places, drawing a picture, making a collage or writing a poem. These activities will be students' representations of their lives in Prince Edward Island. I will provide a disposable camera for their photo taking for those who choose to take photographs. I will give them four weeks to get this done before I meet with them again to discuss their representations.

2. A second 60-minute interview where I will meet with students and ask them to verify the transcripts of the first interviews. Then, I will have the photos there (or ask the students to bring their other representations) to the research conversations. Then I will ask them to describe their representations to me and what they mean to them.

Your involvement includes distributing the information and consent letters to students and making recommendations to Vicki J. Whitlock for translators for specific students as well as any information/consent letters to be translated.

The research conversations will be audio-recorded and transcribed (we will not focus on student speech at all). Audio tapes and transcripts would be destroyed after five to seven years. The tapes, transcripts, and representations would be kept in locked files in my thesis supervisor's office and would be accessible only to me, my thesis supervisor, Dr. Miles Turnbull, or a research assistant working on this project with me. In order to ensure confidentiality of students' participation, the researchers would not share any of the contents of the conversations with anyone not involved in the study. Also, I will not share what I learn from individual students with any other students.

The confidentiality of students' responses would be ensured within the limits of the law. Codes would be used on tapes, transcripts, and representations and no individuals' name or school affiliation would be identified in conference presentations, written reports or publications. I will

ask students for permission to use direct quotations and representations, and to identify these by sex, age and continent of origin (i.e. 16 year old male, Africa).

Also, please note that translators will be provided to students (from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development) at any time during the study.

If you would like to receive more information about the study, or if you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at vjwhitlock@edu.pe.ca; phone: 902-620-3747, or my thesis supervisor, Dr. Miles Turnbull at mturnbull@upei.ca; phone: 902-566-0341. You could also contact the University of Prince Edward Island Research Ethics Board at 902-620-3747, or by email at lmacphee@upei.ca, should you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of this study. I look forward to hearing from you soon. Thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Vicki J. Whitlock

Master of Education Candidate
University of Prince Edward Island

APPENDIX C

Info letter for teacher

[Date]

[Teacher's Name]

[Name and Address of School]

Dear [Teacher's Name]:

My name is Vicki Whitlock. I am a student in the Master of Education in Leadership and Learning program at the University of Prince Edward Island. I am doing research with secondary English as an Additional Language (EAL) students in various Prince Edward Island high schools. My study, English as an Additional Language (EAL) Students' Lived Experiences in Prince Edward Island Schools and Communities, has been approved by the University of Prince Edward Island's Research Ethics Board (REB), the Eastern School District, and by your principal.

I would like to enroll two students from your school. I am interested in hearing EAL students' voices. I would like to better understand their lived experiences in Prince Edward Island schools and communities. I would like to have a conversation with them about these experiences so I can learn more about their challenges and successes here on Prince Edward Island.

During my time with the EAL students, I will conduct two sets of research conversations (interviews) with students by asking them a series of questions (regarding the challenges and success they have experiences) in my first meeting with them. Then, I will also ask them to describe their lived experiences but taking photos of objects or places (not of people), drawing a

picture, making a collage or writing a poem. These will be the representations of their experiences. I will provide them with a disposable camera for those who choose to take photographs. If students are uncomfortable taking photos, they do have the option of one or a combination of the following: draw a picture, make a collage, and/or write a poem.

The student and I will sit down after their representation selection and discuss why they have chosen what they did and what it means to them in terms of their lived experiences in Prince Edward Island schools and communities. I will not show their representation(s), to anyone in public.

As their teacher, your involvement would include assisting in the recruitment of participants for this study. I would ask you to distribute information and consent forms to your students. Then, I would ask you to clearly explain what is expected of them should they want to participate. I would set a deadline with you for consent forms to be returned to you and then mailed to me. I would also chat with you about the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development providing translators as required.

If you would like to receive more information about the study, or if you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at vjwhitlock@edu.pe.ca; phone: 902-620-3747, or my thesis supervisor, Dr. Miles Turnbull at mturnbull@upei.ca; phone: 902-566-0341. You could also contact the University of Prince Edward Island Research Ethics Board at 902-620-3747, or by email at lmacphee@upei.ca, should you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of this study.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Vicki J. Whitlock

Master of Education Candidate
University of Prince Edward Island

APPENDIX D

Information letter for parents

[Date]

[Parent or Guardian's Name]

[Parent or Guardian's Address]

Dear [Parent or Guardian's Name]:

My name is Vicki Whitlock. I am a student in the Master of Education in Leadership and Learning program at the University of Prince Edward Island. I am doing research with secondary English as Additional Language (EAL) students in various Prince Edward Island high schools. My study My study, English as an Additional Language (EAL) Students' Lived Experiences in Prince Edward Island Schools and Communities, has been approved by the University of Prince Edward Island's Research Ethics Board (REB), the Eastern School District, and by your child's principal Prince Edward.

I would like to better understand your child's experiences in Prince Edward Island schools and communities. I would like to have two conversations with them about their lived experiences (day-to-day reflections of academic and social challenges and successes for example) they have faced at school and in the community. I would like to learn more from them about their lives on Prince Edward Island.

I will be spending time with your child to do two research conversations (interviews) of approximately an hour each. I will meet with them in a classroom at a mutual convenient time, either after school or during class time. I will also use a tape recorder to record the conversations

for my research collection and analysis. I will ask students a series of questions (regarding the challenges and successes they have experienced on Prince Edward Island) in my first meeting with them. Then, I will also ask them to describe their experiences through a visual representation (taking photos of places or objects, drawing a picture, making a collage, or writing a poem) of their lives on Prince Edward Island, both at school and in the community. I will provide them with a disposable camera for their photo taking. They will be asked not to photograph people.

In my second meeting with them, your child and I will sit down and I will ask them to describe the visual representation to me and what it means to them in terms of their experiences at school and in the community. Your child's representation and responses will be kept in a locked file in my thesis supervisor's office and codes will be used on tapes, transcripts and representations. Your child's name will not be identified. Translators will be provided to your child from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development at any time during this study as required.

If you would like to receive more information about this study, please contact me at vjwhitlock@edu.pe.ca; phone: 902-620-3747, or my thesis supervisor, Dr. Miles Turnbull at mturnbull@upei.ca; phone: 902- 0341. You could also contact the University of Prince Edward Island Research Ethics Board office at 902-566-0637 or by email at lmacphee@upei.ca about the ethical concerns of this study.

Sincerely,

Vicki J. Whitlock

Master of Education Candidate,
University of Prince Edward Island

APPENDIX E

Information letter for students

[Date]

[Student's Name]

[Student's School Address]

Dear [Student's Name]:

My name is Vicki Whitlock. I am a student in the Master of Education in Leadership and Learning program at the University of Prince Edward Island. I am doing research with secondary English as Additional Language (EAL) students in some Prince Edward Island high schools. My study, English as an Additional Language (EAL) Students' Lived Experiences in Prince Edward Island Schools and Communities, has been approved by University of Prince Edward Island, the Eastern School District, and by your principal.

I would like to invite you to participate in this research by having two conversations with me about your experiences at your secondary school and in your Prince Edward Island community. I am interested in hearing your voice. I would like to better understand your experiences. I would like to have a conversation with you about these experiences so I can learn more about your challenges and successes on Prince Edward Island.

During my time with you, I will do the following:

1. Conduct research conversation #1 (one hour) where I will ask you to respond to 20 questions or statements;

2. Ask you if you have anything to add at the end of research conversation #1 and to prepare for research conversation #2 four weeks from our first conversation, I
3. Will ask you to prepare for research conversation #2 by representing your school and community experiences by either taking photos (of objects or places, not people), drawing a picture, making a collage or writing a poem. Your representation will show me how you feel and what you think about your experiences here on Prince Edward Island. I will provide the necessary materials for you (for example, a disposable camera should you choose to take photos).
4. Conduct research conversation #2 (one hour) where I will begin by giving you the written transcript of research conversation #1 for your verification;
5. Ask you to describe your representations as they show how you feel and what you think about your experiences here on Prince Edward Island;
6. Thank you for your participation;
7. give you a small token of my appreciation for your participation in this study;

8. Inform you of when the second written transcript will be mailed to you, and how to contact me for verification;
9. Inform you of when a summary of the study will be available to you.

Please note the following important details related to participating in this study:

- I will audio-tape our two research conversations and transcribe them:
- I will conduct our conversations at your school at a mutual convenient time;
- I will destroy and shred the audio-tapes and transcripts two years following the date of the conversations;
- I will keep the tapes, transcripts, and representations in locked files, and they will be accessible only to the researchers working on the study;
- I will keep the information collected in this study confidential within the limits of the law;
- I will protect the confidentiality of your responses and representations, by using codes on tapes, transcripts, and representations.

- I will not use your name or identify you in conference presentations, written reports or publications.
- I will give you the written transcript to you so you can verify its contents.
- I will be able to request and access translators at any time during this study as required

Please also note that you may choose not to answer any question, end the conversation at any time, or withdraw from this study at any time, without giving a reason and without adverse consequences. If you would like to receive more information about this study, please contact me at vjwhitlock@edu.pe.ca; phone: 902-620-3747, or my thesis supervisor, Dr. Miles Turnbull at mturnbull@upei.ca; phone: 902- 0341. You could also contact the University of Prince Edward Island Research Ethics Board office at 902-566-0637 or by email at lmacphee@upei.ca.

I would like to offer you, as a participant of this study, a small token of my appreciation (a $25 gift card from Indigo Bookstore) for your time and willingness to share your lived experiences on Prince Edward Island with me.

Thank you for your consideration.

Vicki J. Whitlock

Master of Education Candidate
University of Prince Edward Island

APPENDIX F

Consent letter for students

I, _____ have read and understand the attached information letter. I agree to take part in Vicki Whitlock's study on Secondary EAL Students' Lived Experiences in Prince Edward Island Schools and Communities.

I understand that participation in this study is completely voluntary, which means I have a choice in whether or not I participate in this study. It is not something I have to do, and choosing not to be involved will not affect my education in any way.

I understand that participating in this study will involve two 60-minute research conversations (interviews) and a visual representation (photographs of objects or places, a drawing, collage OR poem) that best represents my experience in a PEI high school and in a Prince Edward Island community.

I understand the purpose of the first conversation will be to discuss my lived experiences by answering questions about the barriers that have proved challenging and the factors that have contributed to my successes, both in school and in my community.

I understand the purpose of the second conversation will be to discuss my visual representation and what it means to me, as it is a further description of my experiences at school and in the community.

I understand that these research conversations would take place face-to-face, in a private room in my high school.

I understand that at any time I may access a translator at any time during this study.

I understand the time of the interview will be decided with my consultation and will be either during class time (with my teacher's consent) or after school as I volunteer my time.

I understand the research conversations will be audio-recorded and transcribed.

I understand the researcher may use my quotations directly, but that my name or identity will not be shared.

I understand the audio-tapes and transcripts will be destroyed and shredded five to seven years following the date of the conversations.

I understand the tapes, transcripts, and representations will be kept in locked files in the researcher's thesis supervisor's, Dr. Miles Turnbull, office, and will be accessible only to the researchers working on the study.

I understand the information collected will remain confidential within the limits of the law.

I understand codes will be used on tapes, transcripts, quotations and representations, and I will not be identified in conference presentations, written reports or publications.

I understand that I can keep a copy of the signed and dated consent form.

I understand that I have the freedom to withdraw at any time and/or not answer any question.

At the completion of the study, I understand that Vicki Whitlock will:

- Offer me a small gift (a $25 gift card to Indigo Bookstore) as a token of appreciation for my time.
- Offer me a summary of the findings of the study by mailing them to me.

Signature: _____ Date: _____
(of person obtaining consent)

Signature: _____ Date: _____
(of participant)

I understand that I can contact Vicki Whitlock at vjwhitlock@edu.pe.ca or by phone: 902-620-3747, or her thesis supervisor, Dr. Miles Turnbull at mturnbull@upei.ca or by phone: 902-566-0341 if I would like to receive more information about this study. I understand that I can contact the UPEI Research Ethics Board office at 902-566-0637 or by email at lmacphee@upei.ca if I have any concerns regarding the ethical conduct of this study.

Thank you for your consideration.

Vicki J. Whitlock

Master of Education Candidate
University of Prince Edward Island

APPENDIX G

Research Conversation #1 Questions

The first research conversation included the following questions:

1. When did you arrive in Canada and on PEI?
2. At the time of your last assessment, what was your English language proficiency level?
3. Describe your first day at your new secondary school in Canada.
4. What were some of the biggest academic challenges you experienced at secondary school in Canada? Why were they challenging for you? Give as many details as possible.
5. Describe some of the other challenges you faced at school?
6. Describe some of the other challenges you faced in your community.
7. What was most challenging for you at school?
8. What classes do you find most challenging and why?
9. What has been the biggest difference between this school and the last school you attended in your home country?
10. What has been the most similar (thing you noticed when comparing this school with the last school you attended in your home county)?
11. Describe your friendships at school and in your community.
12. How do they differ from your friendships in your home country?
13. What has been the best part about living in this community for you?
14. What has been the biggest challenge about living in this community?
15. What do you miss the most about your home community or country?
16. Who provided the biggest support for you in addressing these challenges?

17. Are you still experiencing challenges today? If so, describe them and explain why you think they are challenges for you.
18. What are some of the factors that have contributed to your success at school?
19. What are some of the factors that have contributed to your success in the community?
20. If you could advise someone entering your high school/community, on how to best achieve success, what would you say to him/her?

APPENDIX H

Research Conversation #2 Questions

The second research conversation included the following questions and requests:

1. I will reread this transcript to you. Please verify this information is correct.
2. Please explain which visual representation you chose to do: take a photo; draw a picture; make a collage or write a poem. Why did you choose the one you did?
3. Please describe your photo, picture, collage or poem. (PI reiterates the meanings of the words "representation and "symbol" as necessary).
4. Thinking of your representation above as your symbol, describe what it means to you as you think of your experiences at school and in the community.
5. In your description, you may want to discuss the object you chose, the place, the color, etc.
6. Is there anything else you would like to share with me about your representation?

APPENDIX I

Woodcock-Munoz Language Proficiency Levels

Overall Language Proficiency Descriptors		
Level P	Preliterate	Learner does not have literacy skills in any language.
Level 1	Beginning	Learner is able to read and write in his/her first language. Learner uses limited everyday words or expressions. Learner has very limited English reading, writing, speaking, listening and comprehending skills.
Level 2	Mid/High Beginning	Learner can communicate some basic ideas in English. Learner has very limited academic skills in reading, writing, speaking, and comprehending English.
Level 3	Intermediate	Learner communicates basic ideas about familiar topics with increasing ease. Learner can read, write, and comprehend academic material at a lower grade level. Academic oral English vocabulary is limited. Idioms and culturally related language would be difficult. Grade level classroom curriculum would still be somewhat challenging.
Level 4	Low Transitional/ Advanced	Learner communicates with ease about common everyday topics. Learner is near grade level in academic English skills in reading, writing, comprehending and expressing the English language. Very abstract language and context-reduced activities at grade level would be difficult. Idioms and culturally related language would be difficult. Grade level classroom curriculum would be manageable.
Level 5	Proficient	Learner communicates with ease about common everyday topics. The learner has age-appropriate mastery of cognitive, academic language proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing English. The learner has no difficulty with the academic language of the classroom.

APPENDIX J

Immigrant Student Data

Student Arrival on Prince Edward Island – 1990-2009

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
1990									1				**1**
1994						1				1			**2**
1996												1	**1**
1997												1	**1**
1998							1		1				**2**
1999					1			1	1				**3**
2000				1						1	1		**3**
2001								3		1		2	**6**
2002	1					1			1	1	1		**5**
2003			2		2			2					**6**
2004	1	1	1	1		3		5	1		5	4	**22**
2005		3	1	5	3	1		3	7	3	1	5	**32**
2006	5	2	5	2	6	3	7	12	10	12	6	16	**86**
2007	12	13	12	13	15	32	43	57	51	21	25	15	**309**
2008	17	29	23	13	18	28	40	40	41	26	7	10	**292**
2009	12	10	25	43	40	47	32	56	47	14	17	16	**359**

Student Arrival on Prince Edward Island – 2010-2013

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2010	18	20	25	17	21	43	72	60	56	21	27	15	**395**
2011	17	18	48	30	22	35	45	44	35	23	18	9	**344**
2012	9	16	15	12	19	31	26	25	27	22	10	15	**227**
2013	1												

**As of January 10, 2013*

APPENDIX K

Secondary EAL Course Descriptions

EAL 701A- English as an Additional Language- Beginner/Introductory Level

This beginning/introductory course will be offered to students who already speak at least one other language, or who come from a home in which another language is used. This course will support students' development of English language proficiency, which is required for success in school and the community. It will be highly recommended to students whose English language proficiency level in is assessed at the beginning/introductory level. This course intends to provide students with ample opportunities to listen and speak in English, while developing their English language fluency, accuracy and comprehension. Although the four strands of language (listening, speaking, reading and writing) are interrelated, the main emphasis of this course is on listening and speaking. *Students will be recommended to take EAL 701B the same semester as EAL701A, where possible, as both courses complement one another.*

EAL 701B- English as an Additional Language-English as an Additional Language-Beginner/Introductory Level

This beginning/introductory course will be offered to students who already speak one other language, or who come from a home in which another language is used. This course will support students' development of English language proficiency which is required for success in school and the community. It will be highly recommended to students whose English language proficiency level in is assessed at the beginning/introductory level. This course intends to provide students with ample opportunities to read and write in English, while developing their reading and writing strategies, comprehension, response and analysis. Although the four strands of language (listening, speaking, reading and writing) are interrelated, the main emphasis of this course is on reading and writing. *Students will be recommended to take EAL 701B the same semester as EAL701A, where possible, as both courses complement one another.*

EAL 701C-English as an Additional Language-Intermediate Level

The intermediate level course will be offered to students who already speak at least one other language, or who come from a home in which another language is used. This course will support students' further development and progression of English language proficiency level in listening, speaking, reading and writing is assessed at the intermediate level, or for those who have successfully completed EAL 701A and EAL 701B. This course provides students with ample opportunities to listen, speak, read and write in English. The emphasis of this course is on the

four interrelated strands: listening, speaking, reading and writing. *It is recommended that students who successfully complete EAL 701C will then take EAL701D to further progress in their English language proficiency.*

EAL 701D-English as an Additional Language-High-Intermediate/Advanced Level

This high-intermediate/advanced level course will be offered to students who already speak at least one other language, or who come from a home in which another language is used. This course will support students' further development and progression of English language proficiency level in listening, speaking, reading and writing is assessed at the high-intermediate/advanced level, or for those who have successfully completed EAL 701C. This course provides students with ample opportunities to listen, speak, read and write in English. The emphasis of this course is on the four interrelated strands: listening, speaking, reading and writing. *It is recommended that students successfully complete EAL 701D before taking English 421A or 431A.*

APPENDIX L

Research Ethics Board Approval Letter

UPEI
UNIVERSITY of Prince Edward ISLAND
550 University Avenue
Charlottetown
Prince Edward Island
Canada C1A 4P3

September 28, 2009

Ms. Vicki Whitlock
Faculty of Education

Dear Ms. Whitlock,

Re: REB Ref # 6003313

"English as Additional Language (EAL) Students' Lived Experiences in PEI Schools and Communities."

The above mentioned research proposal has now been reviewed under the expedited review track by the UPEI Research Ethics Board. I am pleased to inform you that the proposal has received ethics approval. Please be advised that the Research Ethics Board currently operates according to the *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* and applicable laws and regulations.

The approval for the study as presented is valid for one year. It is your responsibility to ensure that the Ethics Renewal form is forwarded to the ORD prior to the renewal date. The information provided in this form must be current to the time of submission and submitted to ORD not less than 30 days of the anniversary of your approval date. The Ethics Renewal from can be downloaded from the ORD website
http://www.upei.ca/research/reb_forms

Any proposed changes to the study must also be submitted on the same form to the UPEI Research Ethics Board for approval.

The Research Ethics Board advises that **IF YOU DO NOT** return the completed Ethics Renewal form prior to the date of renewal:

- Your ethics approval will lapse
- You will be required to stop research activity immediately
- You will not be permitted to restart the study until you reapply for and receive approval to undertake the study again.

Lapse in ethics approval may result in interruption or termination of funding.

Notwithstanding the approval of the REB, the primary responsibility for the ethical conduct of the investigation remains with you.

Sincerely,

[redacted]
Lori Weeks, Ph.D.
Chair, UPEI Research Ethics Board

cc. Dr. Miles Turnbull